

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

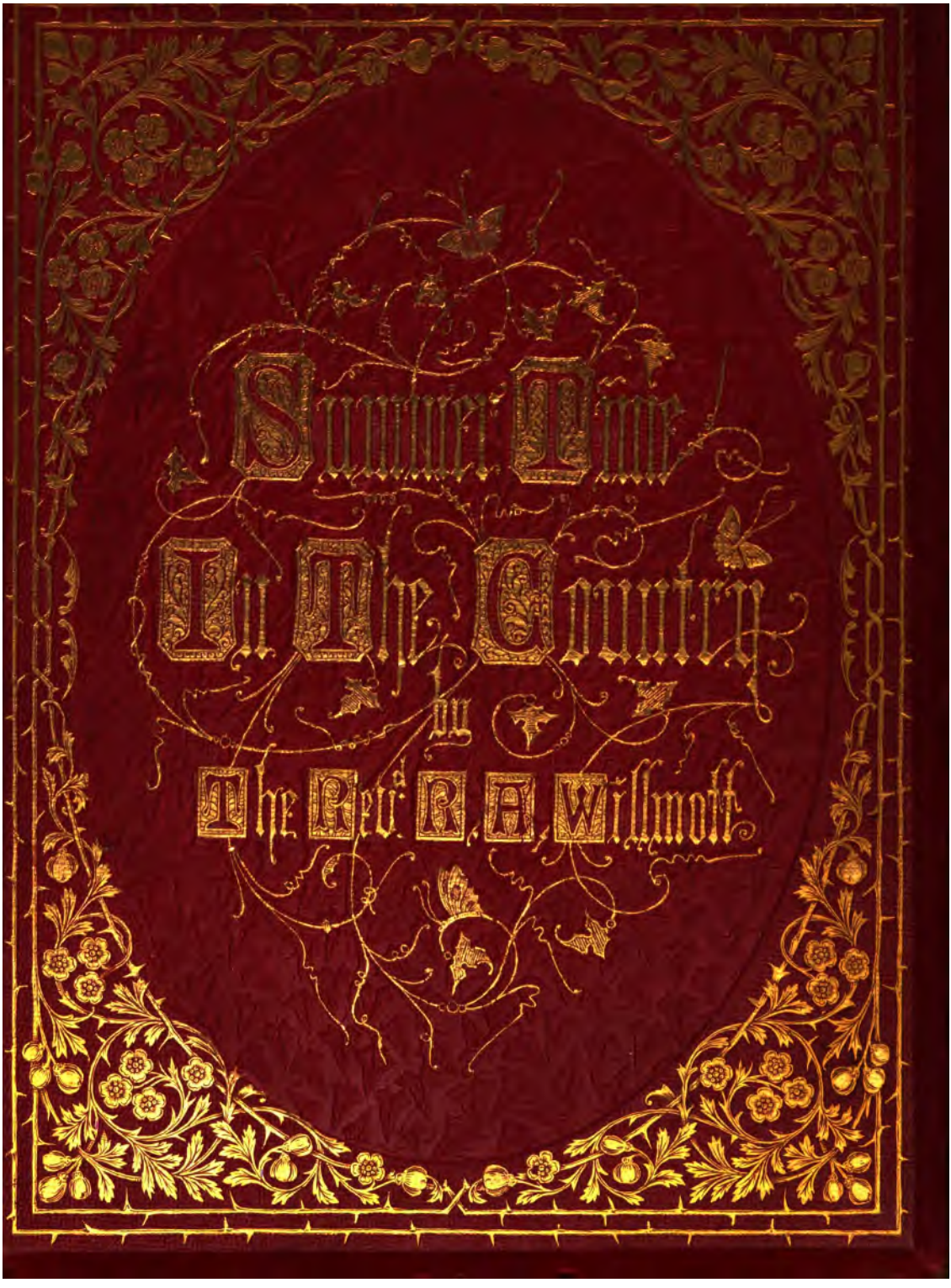
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


Summer Time
In The Country
by
The Revd R. A. Willmott


600082784Z



SUMMER TIME.



SUMMER TIME.

SUMMER TIME IN THE COUNTRY.

BY

ROBERT ARIS WILLMOTT,

INCUMBENT OF BEAR WOOD.

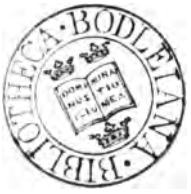
ILLUSTRATED EDITION.

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & CO. FARRINGDON STREET.
NEW YORK: 18, BEEKMAN STREET.
1858.

270. b. 185.

FRIENDS, BOOKS, A GARDEN, AND PERHAPS HIS PEN,
DELIGHTFUL INDUSTRY ENJOYED AT HOME,
AND NATURE IN HER CULTIVATED TRIM,
DRESS'D TO HIS TASTE, INVITING HIM ABROAD.

COWPER, *Task*, B. III.



LONDON:—PRINTED BY RICHARD CLAY,
BREAD STREET HILL.

List of Illustrations,

FROM DRAWINGS BY BIRKET FOSTER, HARRISON WEIR,

AND JOHN M. CARRICK.

ENGRAVED BY THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

	PAGE
SUMMER TIME . . . . . *Frontispiece.*	
THE SKETCHER	1
REMEMBERED SCENERY	5
WOODLAND WALK IN MAY ACROSS THE FIELDS—EVENING . . .	7
SHADOWS AND LIFE	11
THE SCARED OWL	18
THE ROOKERY	20
MOATED GRANGE—THE HERON	22
NIGHTINGALE'S HOME	29
MR. FOX AT ST. ANNE'S HILL	38
VIEW IN VENICE	41
OLD ENGLISH GARDEN	51
THE THAMES AT TWICKENHAM—POPE	55
SANCROFT IN RETIREMENT	61
GIRL ASLEEP	65
CONWAY CASTLE AND RIVER	71
SWANS ON THE LAKE	83
GARE-LOCH IN A STORM	89
HILL-SIDE, WITH CATTLE	93
CHILDREN IN THE CORNFIELD	97
RAINBOW OVER THE CHURCHYARD	103
TINTERN ABBEY	109

PAGE

TIMBER HOUSES 113
MOTHER OF BURNS SINGING AT HER WHEEL 115
THE PIC-NIC IN THE WOOD 123
A MUSICAL FAMILY 127
UNDER THE TREES IN RAIN 130
PACKET SHIP IN A TEMPEST 137
COWPER MUSING BEFORE THE FIRE 143
READING SPENSER—SUNSET 150
LLANGOLLEN VALE 155
HAYMAKERS 158
RUSTIC SEAT BY MOONLIGHT, WITH FIGURES 165
SUMMER REST 167
IVY-GROWN RUINS, AND GOAT 170
WATER-MILL—THE ANGLER 172
SEA VIEW—SHIPS BECALMED 174
BLACKBIRD AMONG TREES 177
A SYRIAN GARDEN 179
CHESS PLAYERS 183
OLD SOLDIER RELATING HIS ADVENTURES 192
THE FLEMISH CHÂTEAU 199
PARTRIDGES ALARMED 201
MASTIFF ROUSED BY FOOTSTEPS 207
THE FALLING LEAF 211

PREFACE.

THE little Book begins a new life with wonder at its own ornaments. I would gladly have made it more worthy of them. Something has been attempted; and readers, who spoke kindly of the Journal on its first appearance in a simpler dress, may be disposed to welcome it, when recommended by the embellishments of Art. The Author will have cause of rejoicing, if his diary shall recall to one memory the observation of Bishop Patrick:—"I find a book of observations, begun in the year 1646, wherein I have noted many useful things, having the word ETERNITY at the top of many pages, by the thought of which I was quickened to spend my time well. It is a great comfort to me now, in my old age, to find that I was so diligent in my youth; for in those books I have noted how I spent my time."

ST. CATHERINE'S,

May 7th, 1858.



SUMMER TIME IN THE COUNTRY.

GRAY always sketched upon the spot the general features of a landscape, and advised his friends to follow his example. "You have nothing to do, but to transcribe your little red books, if they are not rubbed out; for I conclude you have not trusted

anything to memory, which is ten times worse than a lead pencil." The wish is felt by every reader, that Gray had given to us more of his own diaries; or had composed them on a different principle. His stories of home-travel, communicated to Dr. Wharton, are incomparable. But, for the most part, he hid his sweet and learned thoughts in his own bosom. Golden days in the country were lost in critical inquiries respecting insects and plants; or in talk with fishermen about uncertain fins and scales.

Johnson, in his Scottish tour, uses an awful word to express the blending and decay of objects in the mind:—"Many particular features and discriminations are confused and conglobated into one gross and general idea." The landscape of thought is not less shifting and changeable than that of nature; yet each may be fixed, or revived. A few scratches—a word of commentary or abridgment—will often serve to raise a remembrance of the beauty which they represent, and even to recall the colouring and light of the original view or description. An early Hebrew custom appears to be the journal in an allegory. After the destruction of Jerusalem, when a Jew had passed the examination of his teacher, he took a raised seat, and a writing-tablet was put before him, to signify that he ought to record his gains, and not suffer them to fade away unimproved.

In the same spirit, Sir Thomas Bodley wrote to Bacon: "Strain your wits and industry soundly, to instruct yourself in all things between heaven and earth, which may tend to virtue, and wisdom, and honour; and let all these riches be treasured up, not only in your memory, where time may ripen your stock, but rather in good writings and books of account, which will keep them safe for your use hereafter." I have not forgotten Swift's satiric lesson to a young author, how, with an empty head and full common-place book, he might boldly start up a giant of erudition and capacity,

encyclopædic and unfathomable. A book of thoughts, not extracts, is proposed. And it is pleasant to recognise the practice in scholars of ancient days: "Sometimes I hunt," said Pliny, "but even then I carry with me a pocket-book, that, while my servants are busied in disposing the nets and other matters, I may be employed in something that may be useful to me in my studies; and that, if I miss my game, I may at least bring home some of my thoughts with me, and not undergo the mortification of having caught nothing." Beethoven walked in the streets of Vienna with his tablet in his hand.

The sudden gushes of fancy are often the brightest, but the common-places are not to be neglected: they form an important episode in the narrative of intellectual progress. If a book be a garner, the sheaves must have been gathered from many fields. PARADISE LOST and the TRANSFIGURATION grew out of the gleanings of memory. The collections of a morning walk become the memoranda of the painter. Gainsborough formed landscape-models upon his table; broken stones, herbs, and fragments of glass expanded into rocks, trees, and water.

Few men of genius have taken the trouble of recording their feelings or studies; and some precious legacies have perished by accident or design. But when the full light is wanting, an unexpected illumination frequently breaks over a character, from a passage in the published works of the author. A page of the journal is broken up, and melted into the poem or essay. Shakspere's sonnets are a chapter of autobiography, although remaining in cypher till criticism finds the key. Raffaelle's drawings were his diary; the walks and urns and inscriptions of the Leasowes were Shenstone's confessions. The "Task" and the "Excursion" reflect the features of the writers, as face answers to face in water.

The notion of a journal implies variety. Gray confessed that his reading ranged from Pausanias to Pindar; mixing Aristotle and Ovid, like bread with cheese. He might have sheltered himself under a noble example. Lord Bacon considered it necessary to contract and dilate the mind's eye-sight; regarding the interchange of splendour and gloom as essential to the health of the organ. The reader may test the rule by trying it on his natural eyes. In a gorgeous summer day, let him come suddenly from a thick screen of branches, turning his face towards the sun, and then to the grass. Every blade will be reddened, as if a fairy procession had gone by. The colour is not in the grass, but in the eye; as that contracts, the glare vanishes.

Subject the mental sight to a similar experiment. After wandering in the dim recesses of history or metaphysics, let the inward eye be lifted to the broad, central, glowing orbs of Shakspere, Milton, or Hooker, and then immediately cast down upon the common surface of daily life. Objects become hazy and discoloured; the dilation of the nerve of thought dazzles and bewilders the vision. It is wise, therefore, to familiarize the seeing faculty of the understanding to different degrees of lustre. Sunshine and twilight should temper one another. Despise nothing. After Plato take up Reid; closing Dante, glance at Warton; from Titian walk away to K. du Jardin. The student is like the floating honey-gatherers of Piedmont and France—

> Careless his course, yet not without design.
> So through the vales of Loire the bee-hives glide,
> The light raft dropping with the silent tide.

If a letter be conversation upon paper, a journal is a dialogue between the writer and his memory. Now he grows red with Horace, scolding the innkeeper because the bad water had taken away his appetite; and before the strife of tongues has subsided,

he sits down with Shakspere, under a chesnut-tree in Sir Thomas Lucy's park. Thoughts must ever be the swiftest travellers, and sighs are not the only things wafted "from Indus to the Pole" in a moment.



Most people are conscious sometimes of strange and beautiful fancies swimming before their eyes:—the pen is the wand to arrest, and the journal is the mirror to detain and fix them. The mind is

visited with certain seasons of brightness; remote events and faded images are recovered with startling distinctness, in sudden flashes and irradiations of memory; just, to borrow a very striking illustration, as the sombre features and minute objects of a distant ridge of hills become visible in the strong gleams of sun, which fall on them for an instant, and then vanish into darkness. My own journal affords a faint impression of the advantages and charms of which that form of writing is susceptible. But the instrument itself is not affected by the faults of the exhibitor. We are not to deny the transparency of a glass, because the face which it reflects is plain or uninteresting. Let the reader make the attempt, and he may be able to apply to himself and his friends the graceful recollection of Pope in his epistle to Jervas:

> How oft in pleasing tasks we wear the day,
> While summer suns roll unperceived away.

May 1st.

At length, the "fair enjewell'd May" is "blown out of April;" there is something of "a vernal tone" in the wind among the fir-trees, and the delicious line of Chatterton may be read in

> —— King-cups bursting with the morning dew.

The time of green leaves is come again; every moment the day grows lovelier—warm, cool, sunshiny, cloudy. The year's contraries melt into each other, with a spirit of beauty shedding bloom over all, and subduing everything to itself. Thomson chose such sweet airs and purple lights to bathe his Castle of Indolence,—

> —— a season atween June and May,
> Half prankt with spring, with summer half imbrown'd.



It is delicious now to creep through the green trees, and along the scented hedges,

Where blows the woodbine faintly streaked with red,

until you steal on the leafy haunt of the woodlark. Good Mrs. Barbauld expresses my wish in her pretty ode to Spring;—

Now let me sit beneath the whitening thorn,
And mark thy spreading tints steal o'er the dale;
And watch with patient eye
Thy fair unfolding charms.

There is love in this idleness. I know that formal John Wesley put a brand on it: "never be unemployed, never be triflingly employed, never while away time." Such an admonition might be expected from one of whom Johnson left this character: "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure; he is always obliged to go at a certain hour." When Lord Collingwood said, that a young person should not be allowed to have two books at the same time, he fell into a similar error of judgment. Variety is the bloom of life; even animals feel it, and sheep soon loathe the sweetest grass in the same field. The blackbird, that pipes in the warm leaves before my window, is a witness against the preacher and the admiral. He tired of the limeshade, and is finishing his song on an apple-branch, that swings him further into the sun. He wanted a change.

Then what is whiling away time? When Watt sat in the chimney-corner, observing the water force up the cover of the saucepan, he aroused the anger of his relations; but he was discovering the steam-engine. Sir Walter Scott, walking one day by the banks of the Yarrow, found Mungo Park, the traveller, earnestly employed in casting stones into the stream, and watching the bubbles that followed their descent. "Park, what is it that engages your attention?" asked Sir Walter. "I was thinking how often I had thus tried to sound the rivers in Africa, by

calculating the time that elapsed before the bubbles rose to the surface." "Then," said Scott, "I know that you think of returning to Africa." "I do, indeed," was the reply; "but it is yet a secret." Such is the idleness of genius.

The uncle of Pliny reproved him for walking, which he called losing time. How much truer was the confession of Warburton to his friend Hurd: "It would have been the greatest pleasure to have dropped upon you at Newark. I could have led you through delicious walks, and picked off for your amusement in our rambles a thousand notions which I hung upon every thorn as I passed, thirty years ago." They, whom the world calls idle, often do the most. In villages and by-lanes, open eyes are always learning. A garden, a wood, even a pool of water, encloses a whole library of knowledge, waiting only to be read—precious types, which Nature, in her great printing-press, never breaks up. And surely he is happy who is thus taught; for no man can afford to be really unemployed. The tree, it has been said, may lose its verdure; the sun need not count its rays; because the sap will strike out new foliage, and another night refills the treasury of day. But the thinking faculty does not suffer waste. The most saving and thrifty use of it will only make it sufficient for our absolute necessities.

Pascal remarks, that if a man examines his thoughts, he finds them to be occupied with what is, or is to be. The past and the present are paths to the future. *Ainsi, nous ne vivons jamais; mais nous espérons de vivre.* A thought embodying the famous line of Pope:—

Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest.

This disposition is admirable when its aim is improvement; when we look to coming days with a hope of growing better in

them. The remembrance of the succession of one thing to another, *i. e.* of what went before, what followed, and what accompanied it, is called an *experiment.* Many experiments make up experience; which is nothing else but a recollection of what antecedents were followed by what consequents. The definition belongs to Hobbes. Now the experiments of life, which we call our experience, are only valuable as they enable us to shape what we have to do, by success or failure in what we have done. Unproductive husbandry teaches us to look about for a wiser system of cultivation. There must be more weeding, sowing, and watching in our fields. When the husbandman goes out to sow, we hear the shrill cry of the village boys scaring the birds from the furrows. The good seed of the mind is to be guarded from vain thoughts descending with fiercer hunger. Nor will our best instruction be drawn from books. If he who wishes to be pathetic and eloquent is to look in his heart and write; in like manner the scholar of time, completing his education for eternity, will read some of his noblest lessons in the same volume, invisible to other eyes, ever open to his own. And even among the fields and woodlands, he will still be at school.

MAY 3RD.

Oft on the dappled turf at ease,
I sit and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees.

THIS is Wordsworth's plan and mine. I have been thinking of a new series of parallels more entertaining and profitable than Hurd's—Genius, Life, and Shadows. Did you ever spend a summer hour in making notes of shadows, with a view to their history? You would be astonished to find how the spreading, lengthening, and vanishing of a shadow represent the growth,

fulness, and decline of genius or life. In a green, over-bowered lane, where birds shake dew and blossoms from the hedgerows, and spots of sun chequer the wayside grass, look for your own



shadow. At what hour is it behind? When the sun shines in your face, your shadow is at your back. And has it ever been otherwise with poet, painter, or man of noble thought and magnificent enterprise? with Milton or Columbus? Long and

wearisome is their road to glory; steep and entangled is the path towards the rising orb of Fame. They behold not the shadow which they cast; it stretches after them—cheering others, not themselves.

Retrace your steps down the glimmering lane. Let it be evening. What a change! Warm streaks of light gild the edges of bird-homes, and sleep in the dim hollows of mossy oaks:—

O'er the heath the heifer strays,
Free, the furrow'd task is done,
Now the village windows blaze,
Burnish'd by the setting sun.

Trudging as the ploughmen go,
To the smoking hamlet bound,
Giant-like their shadows grow,
Lengthened o'er the level ground.

Where is your own shadow now? It has sprung twenty feet before you, as if it were rushing up the garden, to sit down in the parlour, before you can turn the corner. It is a race between you and your shadow; but you will never overtake it while you travel from the sun. Can you make no simile out of this? When the day of intellectual life sets, and the pilgrim of poetry, eloquence, or art, walks away from the glory of the morning, where is his shadow? It is thrown forward into the untrodden paths of the future, and lengthens at every step, into the rich orchards of a remoter and sunnier climate. You have the history of the mind's shadow in the Shakspere of the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

But you may still

—— sit and play with similes,
Loose types of things through all degrees.

In this wood-path, where the violets cluster so thick under the elm, it is curious to watch the play of leaves on the grass. When

the sun shines, and not even a summer breath ruffles the boughs, the images of trees lie unbroken. The sharp, irregular outline of each leaf is reflected. But the faintest breeze breaks the shadow. The wing of a bird drives another shade over it; the heedless moth —a fly—a gnat, disperses it. The trees of fancy and taste are troubled by the same accidents. They fling their soft images of bloom over the sequestered walks of thought; but the slightest things—the breath of envy, the twinkle of popularity—disorder their beauty. Waller, for a moment, obscures Milton: and Walpole buzzes down the sweet warble of Thomson.

The shadow gives a parallel for a life as well as for a genius. That man fleeth like a shadow and never continueth in one stay, is among the most touching lessons of the dead. Our kindred, not less than our own recollections, illustrate the Prophet and the Psalmist:

> —— for ever as we run,
> We cast a longer shadow in the sun!
> And now a charm, and now a grave is won.

I am pleased to trace out the resemblance in my summer rambles; and when I see myself climbing the silver beech, and losing my head in the top branches, a moral is not wanting.

There is another and a livelier comparison. Sometimes I walk up to the park-paling, and endeavour to look my own shadow in the face; but it is gone, and the robin,

> The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast,

which sat on the top and seemed to sing to it, is vanished also. Here is a simile full of purifying truth. I remember, with good Arthur Warwick, that all our pleasures are shadows, thrown by prosperous sunlight along our journey, and ever deceiving and flying us most when most we follow them. The vapoury form on

the mossy pales, with the robin singing over its head, is only the emblem of some empty dream that walks through life by our side, with Hope carolling above it, and disappearing when reflection draws near, and looks at it with calm and earnest eye. But, while I moralize, the sun is sinking fast,

> —— the slanting ray,
> From every herb and every spiry blade,
> Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.
> Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
> In spite of gravity and sage remark,
> That I myself am but a fleeting shade—
> Provokes me to a smile.

May 4th.

Read a discourse of John Smith, whom Coleridge calls not the least star in the constellation of Cambridge men, the contemporaries of Taylor. Smith was a native of Achurch, near Oundle, Northamptonshire. He was a pupil of Whichcot, at Emmanuel, and died before he had completed his thirty-third year. Bishop Patrick, who knew him well, and preached his funeral sermon, exclaimed, in the fervour of his admiration, "What a man would he have been, if he had lived as long as I have done!" He declared that Smith "spake of God and religion as he never heard man speak." We notice in his thoughts a calm largeness of idea, that is very impressive. For example:—"All those discourses which have been written for the soul's heraldry, will not blazon it so well to us as itself will do. When we turn our eyes in upon it, it will soon tell us its own royal pedigree and noble extraction, by those sacred hieroglyphics which it bears upon itself." Again:—"And because all those scattered rays of beauty and loveliness which we behold spread up and down, all the world

over, are only the emanations of that inexhaustible light which is above, therefore should we love them all in that, and climb up always by those sunbeams unto the Eternal Father of Light." This thought is in the Platonic spirit of Spenser. And with equal nobleness of language he portrays the defaced condition of the human mind; its splendour darkened and the handwriting of the Creator almost worn out. "These principles of divine truth which were first engraven on man's heart with the finger of God are now, as the characters of some ancient monument, less clear and legible than at first." Coleridge, in the third volume of his Literary Remains, observes of the theological school of Smith—"Instead of the subservience of the body to the mind (the favourite language of our Sidneys and Miltons), we hear nothing at present but of health, good digestion, pleasurable state of general feeling, and the like."

MAY 5TH.

A COUNTRY clergyman, Mr. Nowell, has lately published some pleasing corrections of the zoology of our poets. The subject is attractive. Perhaps natural history, in its varieties of field, hedge, and woodland, is the element of decorative knowledge in which the poetical mind is most deficient. Even Thomson mistook the nature of the gad-fly, and spoke of its attack as collective, instead of solitary. Byron need not have amended his comparison of Napoleon, at Waterloo, to the eagle,

> Tearing with bloody beak the fatal plain,—

for though all birds of prey begin the assault with their talons, the beak is the instrument of vengeance and death. Milton, having later lights of science, is sometimes more incorrect than Shakspere. Mr. Nowell selects his sketch of the ant—

The parsimonious emmet provident
Of future——

Ray, in 1691, gave the earliest refutation of this error. But our chief debt is due to Huber. The ant is known to be almost entirely carnivorous; without skill to build garners, or store them with food. Nor is the winter-magazine necessary for the support of the insect, because the depth of its nest protects it from the weather, and severe frost renders it torpid.

The bird-pictures by Poets are commonly well-coloured. Spenser and Milton give exquisite sketches of the peacock—

—— fayre peacocks that excel in pride,
And, full of Argus eyes, their tayles dispredden wide.
Fairy Queen, B. i. c. 4.

—— Th' other whose gay train
Adorns him, colour'd with the florid hue
Of rainbows, and starry eyes—
Paradise Lost, B. vii. 444.

Thomson very happily indicates the peculiarity of the bird's appearance, by saying that it spreads its

— Every-colour'd glory to the sun,
And swims in radiant majesty along;

For when the peacock's train is raised, the head and neck only are visible; and, therefore, the poetical description of its diffused lustre and beauty is very lively and accurate. Its splendid feathers grow up the back.

Occasionally the faithfulness of Milton is startling, particularly in those slight circumstances of zoology, in which poetical footsteps are most likely to be caught tripping. It will be remembered, that he represents Satan entering the garden under the form of a bird:

— up he flew, and on the tree of life
Sat like a cormorant, devising death
To them that lived.

Bishop Stanley remarks that the poet could not have clothed the Tempter in a more appropriate shape, as the appearance of the cormorant is unearthly and alarming;—he notices "his slouching form, his wet and vapid wings dangling from his side to catch the breeze, while his weird, haggard, wildly-staring emerald-green eyes, scowl about in all directions." Nor was the pictorial fitness of the form obtained at any expense of zoological accuracy; for, though chiefly found among water scenery, the cormorant often perches on trees. A serrated claw of the middle toe, which distinguishes it from the pelican, enables it to cling to branches.

It has been said, that all poets, ancient and modern, Shakspere alone being excepted, bestow a melancholy epithet upon the owl. Gray's "moping owl does to the moon complain"—Thomson shows "assiduous in her bower the wailing owl"—Shakspere gives the true portrait, when he makes Lennox say, after the murder of Duncan—

> The obscure bird clamour'd the livelong night;

for the owl sleeps and hisses in the day, and at night hunts and screeches. "Hooting" is not its general mode of expression—not its vernacular. The mountain-owl flies at night, whooping when perched. A friend of Mr. White, in Hampshire, tried all the owls in his neighbourhood with a pitch-pipe, of the sort used for tuning harpsichords, and found them to hoot in B flat. But taste or capacity varies in the family, for the owls of Selborne range between G flat, F sharp, B flat, and A flat. The inquiring naturalist, who has given fame to that charming village, once heard two owls hooting at each other in different keys—two Arcadians indeed.

Beattie, in four of the most natural lines of English poetry, has indicated the flight and the disposition of the owl, leaving

on the reader's mind, at the same time, the solemn sentiment of the landscape:



Where the scared owl, on pinions grey,
Breaks from the rustling boughs;
And down the lone vale sails away,
To more profound repose.

The errors in Thomson's zoology have been remarked, and other examples might be given, as in the description of the

woodlark singing in copses; because its custom is to warble on the wing—not soaring, but circling round its mate.

For the most part, however, his pencil catches every colour and movement of bird or beast. How happy is the picture of the rock-pigeon:

> —— beneath yon spreading ash,
> Hung o'er the steep, whence, borne on liquid wing,
> *The sounding culver shoots.*

The pigeon in full sweep gives a very remarkable sound. But the picturesque word, "shoots," had been already applied to the dove's flight by Dryden, in his musical translation of the lines in Virgil:—

> At first she flutters; but at length she springs
> *To smoother flight, and shoots upon her wings.*

This imitative harmony was sure to win the ear of Coleridge, from whose poetry many exquisite specimens might be selected. Take the following:

> —— When the last rook
> Beat its straight path along the dusky air
> Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing,
> (Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
> Had crossed the mighty orb's dilated glory,
> While thou stood'st gazing; or when all was still,
> *Flew creeking o'er my head.*

The poet tells us that, some months after writing this line, he found Bartram describing the same peculiarity in the Savanna crane: "When these birds move their wings in flight, their strokes are slow, moderate, and regular; and even when at a considerable distance or high above us, we plainly hear the quill feathers; their shafts and webs upon one another creek as the joints or working of a vessel in a tempestuous sea."

Among English poets, Bloomfield and Clare are remarkable



for faithful happiness of description. The little portrait of the skylark by the former is a copy from life,—

Yet oft beneath a cloud she sweeps along,
Lost for awhile, yet pours her varied song.
He views the spot, and as the cloud moves by,
Again she stretches up the clear blue sky;
Her form, her motion, undistinguished quite,
Save when she wheels direct from shade to light.

Coleridge has the same thought, uttered with inferior beauty—

Oft with patient ear
Long-listening to the viewless skylark's note,
Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
Gleaming on sunny wings.

The rural pictures of Clare, with less decoration, present equal truthfulness of colour and sound, as in the following scene from a summer evening walk:—

From the hedge, in drowsy hum,
Heedless buzzing beetles bum,
Haunting every bushy place,
Flopping in the labourer's face.
Now the snail hath made his ring;
And the moth with snowy wing
Circles round in winding whirls,
Through sweet evening's sprinkled pearls,
On each nodding bush besprent;
Dancing on from bent to bent;
Now to downy grasses clung,
Resting for awhile he's hung;
Then to ferry or the stream,
Vanishing as flies a dream;
Playful still his hours to keep,
Till his time has come to sleep;—
In tall grass by fountain's head,
Weary then he drops to bed.

Two of the most pleasing curiosities of poetical zoology which I remember, are in Spenser, who describes an angel,

Decked with divers plumes *like painted jays;*

and in Keats, who speaks of the dyes and stains of a chapel window, rich and numberless,

As are the tiger-moth's deep damask'd wings.

Hood and Crabbe are generally true to nature. Admire "the heron," by Hood,—

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond
Beside the water-hen, so soon affrighted;
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond
Of solitude, alighted.



The moping heron, motionless and stift,
That on a stone as silently and slily
Stood an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily.

and "the bat," by Crabbe,—

> The crawling worm, that turns a summer fly,
> Here spun his shroud, and laid him up to die
> The winter death—upon the bed of state.
> The bat, still shrieking, woo'd his flickering mate.

May 6th.

I FIND Archdeacon Hare commending, with measureless praise, the genius of Mr. Landor. The judgment of Coleridge comes nearer to my taste:—"What is it that Mr. Landor wants to make him a poet? His powers are certainly very considerable, but he seems totally deficient in that modifying faculty, which compresses several units into one whole. His poems, taken as wholes, are unintelligible; you have eminences excessively bright, and all the ground around and beneath them in darkness. Besides which, he has never learned, with all his energy, to write simple and lucid English." The earnest and affectionate applause of Southey should be thrown into the opposite scale. His admiration of Gebir was evidently sincere. But a few beautiful thoughts, shooting stars in the dark, offer to most readers the only allurement in Mr. Landor's poetry. His descriptions of the shell that still murmurs of the ocean, and of the long moonbeam that—

> —— on the hard wet sand
> Lay like a jasper column half up-rear'd,—

are quite enchanting. Of every great author in prose or verse the motion, within certain variations, is uniform. When the singing robe is put off, the Olympian may be known by his walk. It is not so with Mr. Landor. He glitters in purple, or hobbles in rags; is either a prince, or a mendicant on Parnassus. He altogether reverses his own character of writers, who are to circulate

through coming ages; who, once "above the heads of contemporaries, rise slowly and waveringly, then regularly and erectly, then rapidly and majestically, till the vision strains and aches as it pursues them in their ethereal elevation." This is precisely what he does not perform. Now and then he disengages himself from the lumber that clogs him, and begins to ascend. For a moment, he goes up bravely, higher and higher, flashing abroad fair colours in the sunlight, and catching glimpses of towered cities, crowded rivers, and spreading forests. We gaze after his flight with wonder. But before we can tell the story the buoyancy vanishes, and the pilgrim of the sun is seen tumbling back to earth; not with a flaming fall, but lifeless, powerless, collapsed—the breath of inspiration exhausted—to be dragged home in gaudy tatters and defilement. The catastrophe is regretted, in proportion as the ascending impulse is strong.

Mr. Landor has spoken with delight of a draught of pure home-drawn English, from a spring a little sheltered and shaded, but not entangled in the path to it, by antiquity; and he adds, in a richer style, the picturesque contrast of Bacon and Shakspere, between whom he sees "as great a difference as between an American forest and a London timber-yard. In the timber-yard, the materials are sawed, and squared, and set across; in the forest we have the natural form of the tree, all its growth, all its branches, all its leaves, all the mosses that grow about it, all the birds and insects that inhabit it; now deep shadows absorbing the whole wilderness; now bright bursting glade, with exuberant grass and flowers and fruitage; now untroubled skies, now terrific thunder storms; every where multiformity, every where immensity." Among the delightful passages of the poet's prose, I would name the conversation of Sir Philip Sidney and Lord Brooke at Penshurst, which breathes the wisest thoughts

in a strain of music, winning and serious. How beautiful is the remark of Sidney: "Friendship is a vase which, when it is flawed by heat, or violence, or accident, may as well be broken at once; it can never be trusted after. The more graceful and ornamental it was, the more clearly do we discern the hopelessness of restoring it to its former state. Coarse stones, if they are fractured, may be cemented again; precious ones, never."

But the author seldom suffers our pleasure to be without a jar. His great deficiency seems to be in *taste*. He wants, to an extraordinary degree, that bright faculty which colours, subdues, shapes, and combines all the treasures of imagination. His music requires cadence, his painting tone. A coarse satiric humour sometimes breaks out with painful effect. It is a snatch of a political ballad, in the intricate melody of Mozart: it is a sweet face of Murillo, with a border by Cruikshank. Let me not, however, forget the tribute of Southey: "What you have heard me say of his temper is the best and only explanation of his faults. Never did man represent himself in his writings so much less generous, less just, less compassionate than he really is. I certainly never knew any one of brighter genius, or of kinder heart."

MAY 7TH.

COLERIDGE says, or sings, very prettily of the nightingale,—

> —— on moonlit bushes,
> Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,
> You may perhaps behold them in the twigs.
> Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
> Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
> Lights up her love-torch.

In our quiet woods it is not difficult, even in broad daylight, to see and hear the nightingale. This morning I stood for several minutes under the bough, and watched, not only the flashing of

its "bright, bright eyes," but every quick beat and pulsation of what Isaac Walton calls the "little instrumental throat." The exertion, however, is more conspicuous in the blackcap, when in garden or orchard it pours forth its mellow tunes. The throat is then distended with the gush of notes. And this intensity of feeling and effort is sometimes fatal. A thrush has been known to break a blood-vessel in the midst of its music, and drop lifeless from the tree. Nor is the story of the nightingale dying of sorrow, to be considered a mere fiction of the poets. One or two instances of its emulative combats with human musicians are sufficiently attested.

CLARE shall be our guide to the nightingale's nest, up this green woodland drive—

—— She dwells just here.
Hush! let the wood-gate softly clap, for fear
The noise might drive her from her home of love;
For here I've heard her many a merry year,
At morn, at eve, nay, all the live-long day,
As though she lived on song. This very spot,
Just where that old-man's-beard all wildly trails
Rude arbours o'er the road, and stops the way;
And where the child its blue-bell flowers hath got,
Laughing and creeping through the mossy rails;
There have I hunted like a very boy,
Creeping on hands and knees through matted thorn,
To find her nest, and see her feed her young.
And where those crumpling fern-leaves ramp[1] among
The hazel's under boughs, I've nestled down
And watch'd her while she sang.
Let's be hush;
For in this black-thorn clump, if rightly guessed,
Her curious house is hidden. Part aside
Those hazel branches in a gentle way,
And stoop right cautious 'neath the rustling boughs,
For we will have another search to-day,
And hunt this fern-strewn thorn-clump round and round,
And where this reeded wood-grass idly bows,
We'll wade right through.

[1] *Grow luxuriantly.*

There, put that bramble by;—
Nay, trample on its branches, and get near.
How curious is the nest! no other bird
Uses such loose materials, or weaves
Its dwelling in such spots. Dead oaken leaves
Are placed without, and velvet moss within,
And little scraps of grass, and scant and spare,
What hardly seem materials, down and hair;
Snug lie her curious eggs, in number five,
Of deadened green, or rather olive brown,
And the old prickly thorn-bush guards them well.

It would be curious to trace the influence of climate upon the song. Addison, inviting young Lord Warwick into the country, speaks of a concert in the neighbouring wood begun by blackbirds and concluded by a nightingale, "with something of the Italian manner in her divisions." The English bird is supposed to possess, in a weaker degree, the continual warble, "the linked sweetness long drawn out," of her southern rival. The Persian note is affirmed to be the sweetest. The eastern nightingale, or bulbul, is, indeed, of a distinct species, and nearly black; but the same tone is recognised under every change of sun and verdure. The traveller can say—

—— Oft, where Spring
Display'd her richest blossoms among files
Of orange-trees bedeck'd with golden fruit
Ripe for the hand, or under a thick shade
Of Ilex, or, if better suited to the hour,
The lightsome olive's twinkling canopy,—
Oft have I heard the Nightingale and Thrush
Blending as in a common English grove
Their love songs.

It is worth remarking, that three lines of Homer comprise all the facts which later poets have enlarged with regard to the song and disposition of the nightingale. He mentions its custom of hiding itself in the deepest foliage, and marks that many-sounding harmony which gives to its repetitions their highest

charm. The nightingale's peculiar love of wood-shelter is well expressed by Beaumont and Fletcher, who place it

> Among the thick-leaved spring.

The nightingale's voice is singularly piercing, and can be heard over the diameter of a mile. Chaucer notices this characteristic:—

> I heard in the next bush beside,
> A nightingale so lustely sing,
> That her clere voice she made ring
> Through all the greene wood wide.

Thomson makes

> —— Wide around the woods
> Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

Heber points out the same quality in the Indian relative:—

> And what is she whose liquid strain
> Thrills through yon copse of sugar-cane?
> I know that *soul-entrancing swell*,—
> It is, it must be, Philomel.

Sylvester—among whose craggy recesses of wild fancy the youthful hand of Milton gathered a few sweet-smelling flowers—pleasantly commends nightingales as the part-singers of the woodlands,—

> Thence thirty steps, amid the leafy sprays,
> Another nightingale repeats her lays,
> Just note for note, and adds some strain at last
> That she had conned all the winter past.

It is curious to observe how resolutely, even by writers on natural history, the fabulous shyness of the bird is still maintained; but people, who live in the country have daily opportunities of correcting the error. Dwelling in the greenest and shadiest coppices, the nightingale often chooses a tree with scarcely a leaf, and, perched upon a slender twig, pours out



the choicest variations. It lives among the leaves, but continually sings in the gay sunshine.

Thomson's description of the bird finding her nest plundered and empty, and giving utterance to her grief, is only a poetic fiction, though beautifully imagined:—

> Oft when, returning with her loaded bill,
> The astonished mother finds a vacant nest,
> By the hard hand of unrelenting clowns,
> Robb'd, to the ground the vain provision falls;
> Her pinions ruffle, and, low-drooping, scarce
> Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade,
> Where all abandoned to despair, she sings
> Her sorrows through the night.

The true account of the nightingale's song is given by the same poet, in speaking of birds in general, when copse, and tree, and flowering furze are spotted with nests:—

> —— The patient dam assiduous sits,
> Not to be tempted from her tender task,
> Or by sharp hunger, or by smooth delight,
> *Though the whole loosened Spring around her blows;*
> Her sympathising lover takes his stand
> High on th' opponent bank, and ceaseless sings
> The tedious time away.

Among singing birds, the nightingale is unrivalled in the power of sustaining a note, but is surpassed in volume and compass of sound by the Campanero, or Bell-bird. In the silence of a South-American or African night, it begins to toll; continuing its one lonely cry at intervals of a minute. This toll, with its measured mournfulness, is clearly heard at a distance of three miles. The nightingale despises monotony. Its song has sixteen different burdens, the same passage being never reproduced without some change or embellishment. This variegated harmony is described by a French poet, R. Belleau, who lived in the middle of the sixteenth century, and, for the sweet touches of his landscapes was called the Painter of Nature.

BELLEAU.

Le gentil rossignolet
Doucelet,
Decoupe dessous l'ombrage,
Mille fredons babillars,
Fretillars,
Au doux chant de son ramage.

CARY.

The little nightingale sits singing aye
On leafy spray,
And in her fitful strain doth run
A thousand and a thousand changes,
With voice that ranges
Thro' ev'ry sweet division.

Some naturalists have been bold enough to write down the song—to give the nightingale's *score*. The result has been a travestie. It is as if an admirer of Laura had taken her portrait in red ochre, and sent it to Petrarch.

Poetical descriptions of the nightingale's habits and music have seldom been the result of observation and experience. The best are by Walton, recording "the sweet descant, the rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice;" by Goldsmith, when he said that the "pausing song" would be the proper epithet of its warble; by Southey, in dwelling on its breadth and power,

—— her deep and thrilling song
Seemed with its piercing melody to reach
The soul;

by Coleridge—

—— 'T is the merry nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With thick fast warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburden his full soul
Of all its music;

by Keats, telling how—

—— the plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side, and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glade:

and more than all by Milton, who, living during his bright and

happy youth among the leafy villages of Buckinghamshire, was familiar with the nightingale in all hours of summer days and nights, and is never weary of introducing it. But it is observable, that he always associates the song with meditation and pensiveness. L'Allegro looks through the sweet-brier, that clusters about the window, at the lark soaring upwards—

> From his watch-tower in the skies,
> Till the dappled dawn doth rise.

Il Penseroso walks unseen along the wood-path, listening to the bird that

> —— shuns the noise of folly,
> Most musical, most melancholy.

And it is the even-song that the poet lingers to hear. Whether it be in lyric, sonnet, or strain of higher mood,—the nightingale on

> —— bloomy spray
> Warbles at eve, when all the woods are still.

The tune is ever composed of

> The liquid notes that close the eye of day.

In Eden, where the earliest lovers,

> —— lull'd by nightingales, embracing slept,

the same sacred calm is preserved. By a single epithet the whole character of the music is fixed and painted,—

> —— sweet the coming on
> Of grateful evening mild; then silent night,
> *With this her solemn bird.*

Price remarks that Milton, whose eyes seem to have been affected by every change of light, always speaks of twilight with peculiar pleasure; he has even placed it in heaven—

> From that high mount of God, *whence light and shade*
> Spring forth, the face of brightness heaven had changed
> *To grateful twilight.*

He was indeed thirty-six years old before his sight grew weak and dim; but the irritability of the organ was probably felt long before.

I may mention one happy circumstance in the history of the nightingale's lay, which Coleridge observed. There is a pause in the dark wood; the stars are dim; suddenly the moon sails through the cloud; the grass and leaves brighten—

> —— and these wakeful birds
> Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
> As if some sudden gale had swept at once
> A hundred airy harps.

In Aleppo, nightingales are the popular concert-singers, engaged by the evening; their cages are suspended from trees, and the company walk under them and enjoy the choir. But here, in this cool greenwood, they find pleasanter homes. A deep copse is the cage, with sunny leaves instead of wires, and moonbeams sliding softly in for lanterns when it grows dark. There he is again—how simple and unpretending in look and colour! Thomson's compliment to Pope paints the bird to a feather:

> —— his eye was keen,
> With sweetness mixed. In russet brown bedight,
> *As is his sister of the copses green.*

Can this be the nightingale which I heard singing on the same hawthorn in last May and June? He left us in August, and has been absent between eight and nine months. What he must have seen and heard in his long vacation! While the sleet froze on my window, and his lonely neighbour the robin piped on the snowy bough, where was he? Probably enjoying a run among the Greek Isles. I have read of a naturalist who understood the bird-language. Why did he not give lessons? I should like to ask this nightingale a few questions about his travels; such

as—Whether he compared the dark sea, streaked by deepest purple, with our lake? marble pillars of ruined temples on green hill-sides, with gables and porches of old Berkshire farms? or dim islands—Cos and Ithaca—glimmering through a cloud-curtain of silver, with our country towns, just visible in the early dawn? Perhaps he preferred a tour in Egypt, long a favourite winter-home of his kindred. What food for those "bright, bright eyes," in the land of sphinxes and mummies! What a stare at the Pyramids, and longing, lingering look at Rosetta! Our Loddon—the tranquil and clear-flowing—is a pretty river; but think of the Nile sprinkled with spreading sails, and bordered by gardens. Pleasant falls the shade from vast boughs of sycamore and fig trees! I can see him plunging into the twilight groves of date, citron, lime, and banana, and covering himself over in gloom and fragrance. There, truly, he might sit "darkling." What bowers of roses! But no—our wood challenges the world for roses; and here Hafiz might have contented his own Bulbul.

Surely that "bright, bright eye" drank in with wonder the living figures of the landscape—and, strangest of them all, the Arab in his long blue dress at the door of the Mosque of Abumandur. How different from our parish-clerk shutting the church windows in the evening! One is curious to know what a nightingale, on his first tour, would think of his own feathered brethren and the quadrupedal race:—of that rare fellow the pelican, with his six-men-power appetite—and the buffalo, his black nose snorting the Nile into foam, as he crosses from side to side.

But the sweet musician who sits on his branch rejoicing, quite heedless of me or my speculations, may have taken a different road. If he visited the Archipelago and Egypt in former years, did he turn his wing to Syria? Again I sigh for the bird-language. Touching stories that tongue might tell of the field which

the Lord hath blessed with the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine; the woody tops of Carmel; the sunny vineyard and grassy upland; the damask rose; the stately palm of the Jordan; the silver sands of Gennesaret; and the sweet flowers

That o'er her western slope breathe airs of balm;

the hum of bees in clefts of the rocks; the solemn olive-garden; the lonely wayside! For think of the reach of that large dark eye! A French naturalist has calculated the sight of birds to be nine times more powerful than that of man. Belzoni himself would have been nearly blind by the side of this little brown explorer.

But, oh! unmindful nightingale! a broader, brighter eye was bent over thee—the eye that never slumbers nor sleeps—as thou screenedst thyself in the orange branches. If the young ravens that call on Our Father are fed from His Hands, and the sparrow, sitting alone on the housetop, does not fall to the ground unobserved or uncared for; surely thou art ever seen and watched —in the rose-gardens of the East, and the green coppices of English woods—dear pilgrim of music and beauty. I think thou art God's missionary, publishing abroad His wonders and love among the trees—most eloquent when the world is stillest. Time and Sin have not touched thee or thy melody. Where thou art, Paradise grows up before the gaze of faith, as when the burnished boughs flung long shadows over Eve, dreaming by moonlight under the cedars.

Sweet bird, that sing'st away the early hours
Of winters past, or coming, void of care,
Well pleased with delights which present are,
Fair seasons, budding sprays, sweet-smelling flowers;
To rocks, to springs, to rills, from leafy bowers

Thou thy Creator's goodness dost declare,
And what dear gifts on thee He did not spare,
A stain to human sense in sin that lowers.
What soul can be so sick which by thy songs
(Attir'd in sweetness) sweetly is not driven
Quite to forget earth's turmoils, spites and wrongs,
And lift a reverend eye and thought to Heaven?
Sweet artless songster, thou my mind dost raise
To airs of spheres, yes, and to angels' lays.

MAY 8TH.

GOLDSMITH appears to have been very fond of Tibullus. "A diseased taste," he says (Essay xii.), "will prefer Ovid to Tibullus, and the rant of Lee to the tenderness of Otway." Goldsmith's criticism was obviously false, for Ovid includes Tibullus. However, some of his verses are very elegant; Mr. Cary, the translator of Dante, applauds the conclusion of the first elegy, as one of the finest passages he remembered—and few modern scholars had a wider acquaintance with poetic literature. Lanzi remarks, that he who feels what Tibullus is in poetry, knows what Andrea del Sarto is in painting. The parallel is apt; Sarto was distinguished by the finish of his style. In his "Holy Family Reposing," every hair has a distinct truth. The colouring of the painter corresponds with the language of the poet. In the fourth elegy of his third book, he describes himself tossing through a troubled night, until, as the sun rose above the hills, he fell asleep. Suddenly his chamber brightened with a beautiful apparition, which is most exquisitely described. Each word has its hue, like the separate hairs in Sarto's picture. Of all such excellence as that of Tibullus, the secret is labour. "I am glad your 'Fan' is mounted so soon; but I would have you varnish and glaze it at your leisure, and polish the sticks as much as you can." This was Pope's advice

to Gay, which he was too indolent to follow. Genius, when it has the large sensitive eyes of taste, is slow and painful: Guido never satisfied himself with an eye, nor A. Caracci with an ear. When Domenichino was reproached for not finishing a picture, he said, "I am continually painting it within myself." How often Milton sat under a cedar with Eve, and Shakspere gazed into the passionate eyes of Juliet, before the last kindling glow of beauty was imparted!

May 9th.

I see they are reprinting the speeches of Mr. Fox. It is known that Burke called him the most brilliant and accomplished debater whom the world ever saw. The praise was characteristic of the utterer and the subject. Burke, however, did not exclude the idea of eloquence from his definition. To Fox belonged the visible rhetoric. He swelled with the tide of invective, and rose upon the flood of his indignation. A dear friend has given me a vivid portrait of his manner and appearance. Holding his hat grasped in both hands, and waved up and down with an ever-increasing velocity, while his face was turned to the gallery, he poured out torrents of anger, exultation, and scorn. But Fox the declaimer was paralysed by Fox the man. It was affirmed by a Greek writer, in a passage made famous by Ben Jonson, that a poet cannot be great without first being good; and Aristotle intimates that the personal purity of the orator was a question moved in his own day. Fox showed the truth of this critical axiom. His intellectual capacity was impaired by the moral. The statue is imposing, but the pedestal leans.

I will add that the late Mr. Green of Ipswich, an acute and well-informed observer, always mentioned with admiration Fox's

speeches on the Reform of Parliament in 1797, on the Russian armament, and his reply on the India Bill in 1783, which he pronounced to be absolutely stupendous. But the reader turns



with most interest to the graceful side of his character; his delight in common rural pleasures, and the charms of literature. It is refreshing to accompany the stormy Cleon of Westminster into

the shades of St. Anne's Hill, and see him, in the description of his friend,

> —— so soon of care beguiled,
> Playful, sincere, and artless as a child,

enjoying the sunshine and flowers with an almost bucolic tenderness and freedom from restraint; either

> —— watching a bird's nest in the spray,
> Through the green leaves exploring day by day;

or, with a volume of Dryden in his hand, wandering from grove to grove and seat to seat—

> To read there with a fervour all his own,
> And in his grand and melancholy tone,
> Some splendid passage not to him unknown.

I observe this morning the delicious effect of the young leaves mirrored in the still water. The colour is so delicate and fresh, that it might be called the bloom of green; and the charm is heightened by two swans sailing in their stately way, over the verdurous crystal, and looking like chaplets of white roses blown along the grass.

MAY 10TH.

RODE over to Bramshill, the seat of Sir John Cope, and looked at Vandyck's portrait of himself. "That Flemish painter—that Antonio Vandyck—what a power he has!" The apostrophe which Scott puts into the mouth of Cromwell at Whitehall, before the picture of Charles I., rises to every lip in the presence of Vandyck. In truth of imitation, delicacy of drawing, and dignity of expression, he stands alone. No starveling forms of Albert Dürer—to adopt a phrase of Fuseli—no swampy excrescences of Rembrandt,

shuffle along in squalid deformity. Waller suggested the secret charm of his pencil in a most speaking line—

> Strange! that thy hand should not inspire
> The beauty only, but the fire;
> Not the form alone and grace,
> *But art and power of a face.*

In a page on portrait-painters, I cannot omit two of different tastes, yet most wonderful genius—Holbein and Giorgione. No masters are more unlike; each is the antithesis of the other. Hazlitt thought that the works of Holbein are to the finest efforts of the pencil what state papers are to history; they present the character in part, but only the dry, the concrete, the fixed. Giorgione, on the contrary, gives the inner spirit and life of thought. His faces are ideal, and yet real. The same countenance, painted by Holbein and Giorgione, would resemble an English story told by Holinshed and illuminated by Spenser. Both are precious—the fact as authenticating the poetry, and the poetry as embellishing the fact. In a parallel, Rubens would naturally come in; but Raffaelle cannot be bracketed.

Something of imaginative reality is seen in Vandyck; in general beauty and completeness, he yields to Titian. "Vandyck's portraits," said Northcote, "are like pictures; Reynolds', like reflections in a looking-glass; Titian's, like the real people." Sir Charles Eastlake has a remark on this characteristic of Titian, in a note to Goethe's theory of colours. He observes, with reference to the flesh-tint, that its effects, at different distances, can never be so well compared, as when the painter and his subject draw near and go by each other on an element so smooth, in scenery so tranquil, as Venice afforded to its greatest painter. Gliding along the waveless canals in the calm gondola, the rich complexions of Italian beauty, and the serious grandeur of manly

wisdom, delighted his eye. The same writer reminds us, that the season for these artistic studies was the evening, when the sun had set behind the hills of Bassano, and a glowing and scattered light poured a balmy softness into all the shadows. Living in the northern part of Venice, Titian enjoyed in their fulness these



charming twilights. I may add, that Uvedale Price considered the whole system of Venetian colouring, particularly of Giorgione and Titian, to have been founded upon the tints of autumn; while Rubens looked for his brilliant hues in the light freshness of the early spring. Hence came the warm golden tinge of the one, and

the dewy gaiety of the other. The flowers of Titian and Rubens belong to different seasons of the year.

MAY 12TH.

I ALWAYS find it pleasanter to let authors or celebrated men tell their own history, than to read it in biographies. The discoveries may be slight, but how life-like! We catch the form and face in a looking-glass, of which the person is unconscious. He has no opportunity of making up his countenance, but is sketched, like Pope while in conversation with a friend in the gallery of Prior Park, and transferred to canvas before he knows that an eye is on him—hump and all. My meaning will be brought out by a few examples. Shenstone communicates to one of his correspondents the ravages of a caterpillar, which had devoured the greenness of Lord Lyttelton's large oaks, while his own were protected by their insignificance. This one paragraph unfolds the secret of his existence. The fame of the Leasowes was the hinge of his happiness. The insect, eating his neighbour's tree, gives his own biography in miniature.

Everybody knows Pepys, and laughs at him; he was a frivolous gossip; a thinner kind of Horace Walpole. But the following circumstance reduces him to smaller dimensions. A subject that weighed heavily on his thoughts during the great Plague, was the fashion of periwigs; thenceforward, people would buy no hair, lest it had been cut from the heads of those who died of the pestilence. The periwig was the memoir of Pepys in a summary.

Lord Chatham was an admirable reader of poetry, and sometimes delighted his friends with scenes from Shakspere's historical plays; but when he came to any episode or fragment of comedy, he always handed the book to a relative. Combine this incident with the public life and appearance of the statesman,

as displayed in the crimson drapery—the tye-wig—the statuesque attitude—and the Under Secretaries, who were not permitted to sit down in his official presence; and admit that the Clown "left out" is an indication of character.

I confess that Pope's "good-natured Garth" has sunk in my esteem, since I read of Gay setting him down at the Opera, and receiving a squeeze of the forefinger by way of thanks. A straw shows the wind, and shaking hands is a manifestation of feeling. Latin biography affords a different specimen: "I have received," wrote Pliny to a friend, "the same bad account of my own little farms, and am myself, therefore, at full leisure to write books for you, provided I can but raise money enough to furnish me with good paper. For should I be reduced to the coarse and spongy sort, either I must not write at all, or whatever I compose must necessarily undergo one cruel blot." Thus agricultural distress sinks into a question of "outsides;" and Trajan himself might have waited for his panegyric if the ink had been watered.

Sometimes a *bias* is given to the mind by a particular occurrence, which all its future motions acknowledge. We have an instance in Franklin, related by himself. He was leaving the library of Dr. Mather, at Boston, by a narrow passage in which a beam projected from the roof. They continued talking, until Mather suddenly called out—"*Stoop! stoop!*" Before his visitor could obey the warning, his head struck sharply against the beam. "You are young," said his friend, "and have the world before you; *stoop* as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps." Franklin recollected the caution, especially when he saw people mortified by carrying their heads too high. He did not, however, limit the advice to a prudent humility: it was the motto of his life—he went to his grave stooping. All his thoughts, desires, and actions were of one growth and stature—

clever, but stunted. His writings are cramped into the same posture; so that one, not indisposed to value or applaud his talents, has remarked, that in his hands "a great subject sometimes seems to become less bright while it is elucidated, and less commanding while it is enforced." And thus it came to pass that an accidental moral, drawn from a beam in a roof, influenced for ill the judgment and conduct of a remarkable person.

Perhaps the gleams of deep inward thought and feeling that shine and melt over the familiar letter, poem, or criticism, are to be preferred even to the talk of the writer, as being more sincere and unaffected. Conversation, however, gives very clear traits of character; it is the shadow on the dial, and tells the hour; but they must be marked at the instant. A looker-on should be quick and cautious. If you bend over the dial, you break the shadow, and the clock is silent; at the best, the indication never continues long, because the light burns only for a moment, and is gone. Our happy glimpses of Johnson, revelations of his dignity, virtues, follies, wisdom, and weakness, are owing to this immediate observation. Boswell was generally at hand to catch and copy the feature, as the illumination of anger, pleasure, fancy, or disease, sparkled behind the fleshly veil. He seized the shape and colour of the moral transparency before the flame vanished.

Occasionally, a single anecdote opens a character; biography has its comparative anatomy, and a saying or a sentiment enables the skilful hand to construct the skeleton. Lord Marchmont tells us that Pope fell asleep if the conversation was not epigrammatic. The first act of Sterne, on entering a drawing-room, was to take from his pocket a page of a new volume of Tristram Shandy and read it to the company. The poet of the Essay on Man, and the caricaturist of Trim, ascend immediately to the eye, while we read these slight circumstances of their private history.

Indications of character are recognised in pictures as well as in books. Raffaelle paints his own mind, as Spenser writes it. I will refer to the different aspects under which the history of the Crucifixion has been represented; consulting Burnet's notes on Reynolds by the way. M. Angelo, whose power lay chiefly in expression and grace of contour, selected the view of the subject likeliest to favour his peculiar talent: Raffaelle, for the same reason, chose the point of time when the body is taken down. Tintoret concentrates his force in the suffering Mother at the foot of the Cross: Rubens dares every variety of attitude. In one design, we have the elevation of the Cross; in another, the executioners are breaking the legs of the thieves. Here the grouping may be more effective; there, the colouring more brilliant; but in each and all, picturesque results, without regard to truth, are the aim proposed. In Rembrandt, light and shade become the conspicuous elements; and, remembering that darkness overspread the land, he portrays the taking down from the Cross by moonlight. Thus, in the painter and the poet, the inward consciousness of power is beheld working by favourite instruments. One hand shows its cunning in light; a second, in shadow; a third, in anatomy; and men, books, and pictures give us in their own way indications of character.

May 13th.

I was interested to-day by the remark of an accomplished portrait-painter. He told me that he had observed, in every celebrated person whose features he copied, from the Duke of Wellington downwards, a *looking of the eye into remote space.* The idea occurs often in literature. Milton gives an example in his description of Melancholy:

—— with even step and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
The rapt soul sitting in her eyes!

Sterne assigns the same peculiarity to the face of his Monk, in the Sentimental Journey; his head, "mild, pale, penetrating; free from all common-place ideas of fat, contented ignorance looking downwards upon earth; it *looked forward, but looked, as if it looked at something beyond the world.*" Nothing can be more exquisite than the iteration. The late Mr. Foster probably had this portrait in his remembrance, when he described the Christian in society—in the world, but not of it: "He is like a person whose eye, while he is conversing with you about an object, or a succession of objects immediately near, should glance every moment *towards some great spectacle appearing in the distant horizon.*"

Moore's elegant tale of the Epicurean supplies another instance: Alethe raises a silver cup from the shrine—"Bringing it close to her lips, she kissed it with a religious fervour; then turning her eyes mournfully upwards, held them fixed with a degree of earnestness, as if in that moment, in direct communion with heaven, they saw neither roof nor any earthly barrier between them and the skies." And a fifth illustration is furnished by Mr. Keble, in his picture of Balaam foretelling the happiness of Israel, and the rising of the Star:—

O for a sculptor's hand,
That thou might'st take thy stand,
Thy wild hair floating on the eastern breeze;
Thy tranc'd yet open gaze
Fix'd on the desert haze,
As one who deep in heaven some airy pageant sees.

The artist to whom I allude does not add literature to his genius. I believe that he never heard of Foster; it is just possible

that he may be unacquainted with Sterne. His remark will then be the fruit of independent and individual experience; and on that account it lends a most interesting commentary upon the illustrations of fancy.

MAY 14TH.

THE earliest editor of Bossuet's Sermons describes the writer to have been a diligent student of Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Augustine. But he looks on him as appropriating what he borrows, and being scarcely less original when he quotes, than when he invents. This is only an exaggerated anticipation of Hall's panegyric of Burke's imperial fancy, "laying all nature under tribute." Such a mind translates an image into its own language, as we may learn from two of our poets: Cowley describes the equipment of Goliath, and Milton puts it into the hands of Satan:—

COWLEY.

His spear the trunk was of a lofty tree,
Which nature meant some tall ship's mast
should be.

MILTON.

His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some high admiral, were but a wand
He walked with.

Here Milton heightens the picture by circumstances that impart to it the dignity of invention. The spear of the Devil is far grander than that of the Giant. It is the difference between the dialect of gods and men in the Iliad. We read the same lesson in Art. The eye of taste has long been familiar with the Notte of Correggio, and the flowing out of light from the Child into the Mother's face. The thought itself, however, was not new. In the Vatican fresco of St. Peter delivered from prison, Raffaelle

makes the lustre proceed from the angel. Correggio and Milton, therefore, are imitators alike, but their debts do not diminish their capital. I think the same allowance is due to Campbell and Rogers in the following verses; although, in the case of the second writer, a note of acknowledgment seems to be demanded. The passage from Campbell occurs in his description of Adam wandering restless through Paradise, before the creation of Eve:—

> And say, without our hopes, without our fears,
> Without the home that plighted love endears,
> Without the smile, from partial beauty won,
> *Oh! what were man!—a world without a sun.*

The last line is the most striking of the four, but it is at least twelve hundred years old. Luther quotes the phrase from St. Augustine:—"A marriage without children is the world without the sun."

In the Pleasures of Memory, which inspired those of Hope, the perishing nature of that blessing is elegantly delineated:—

> Lighter than air, Hope's summer visions fly;
> If but a fleeting cloud obscure the sky,
> If but a beam of sober reason play,—
> Lo! fancy's fairy frost-work melts away.

Compare these verses with Warburton's Inquiry into the Causes of Prodigies, as related by Historians, where he paints with singular force and beauty the fickleness of Sallust—at one time the advocate of public spirit, and, at another, sharing in the robberies of Cæsar: "No sooner did the warm aspect of good fortune shine out again, but all those exalted ideas of virtue and honour, raised like a beautiful *kind of frost-work in the cold season of adversity, dissolved and disappeared.*"

The question of imitation has been treated by Hurd with ingenuity and taste; and his Essay will be consulted with pleasure

and advantage. The art of discovering the elements of beauty, and modifying them to his own use, appears to be one of the chief implements of the orator and poet. Burke told Barry—"There is no faculty of the mind which can bring its energy into effect, unless the memory be stored with ideas for it to work on." Genius made Achilles and Lady Macbeth, but observation of character supplied the rudiments of creation. In one, we have the ideal of heroism—in the other, of crime. The supremacy of intellect is shown in the elevation and brightening of each borrowed feature, so as to harmonize with the countenance into which it is blended. In other words, imitation must be governed by selection. The pictures of Caravaggio exhibit the injurious results of one of these qualities in isolation. A beggar is transformed into a saint, but the mendicant nature remains under the new type. The same defect is observable in Guido. The feminine expression constantly reappears; Venus and Judith are equally delicate and gentle. In looking, therefore, at the cloud of poets whom the commentators bring forward as creditors of Milton, we may recollect Opie's definition, and resolve invention into the command of a large treasury of ideas, and an instinctive readiness and grace in combining them through every variety of shape and colour.

May 15th.

It was in the neighbouring village of Swallowfield that Lady Clarendon displayed her taste for flowers. Why have we no history of English gardens? It might make a reputation. Mr. Johnson has drawn up a sketch, but dry and imperfect. We want Evelyn and Walpole united, with a tinge of Gray. The monks were the first horticulturists. Orchards and gardens grew round

the sequestered homes of learning. Chaucer describes a garden of the fifteenth century—

> This yerde was large, and railed al the aleyes,
> And shadowed well with blossoming bowis grene,
> And trenched newe, and sandid all the wayes.

The gardens of Nonsuch, in the reign of Henry VIII., might be taken as the starting-point. The fountains were particularly splendid; and Spenser only heightened the fashion of his time, when he described the

> —— richest substance that on earth might be,
> So pure and shiny, that the silver floode
> Through every channel one might running see;
> Most goodly it with pure imagerie
> Was ever wrought.

About the same period, Hampton Court was laid out by Wolsey. A paper in the "Archæologia" supplies some pleasing notices; and a scholar, of high attainments, recently communicated several particulars to the open and watchful ear of Sylvanus Urban. He mentions Hollar's engraving of Boscobel and Lord Arundel's seat in Surrey; the delicious pleasure-grounds of Sir Matthew Decker on Richmond-green, where the pine-apple was first brought to perfection; Beddington, the place of the Carews, and the home of the earliest orange-tree planted in England; and Ham House, on the banks of the Thames, shaded by springing elms, and still reminding us of Evelyn's account of its pastures, orangeries, groves, fountains, and aviaries. In later days, Ham House has been sketched by the same pencil that gave fame to Our Village. "Ham House is a perfect model of the mansion of the last century, with its dark shadowy front, its steps and terraces, its marble basins, and its deep silent court. Harlow Place must have been just such an abode of stateliness and seclusion. Those iron gates

seem to have been erected for no other purpose than to divide Lovelace from Clarissa—they look so stern and so unrelenting. If there were any Clarissas now-a-days, they would be found at Ham House. And the keeping is so perfect. The very flowers are old-fashioned. No American borders, no kalmias or azaleas, or magnolias, or such heathen shrubs. No flimsy China roses.



Nothing new-fangled. None but flowers of the olden time, arranged in gay, formal knots, staid, and trim, and regular, and without a leaf awry."

I may add that Camden, a contemporary of Spenser, mentions Guy-Cliffe, in Warwickshire, with unusual animation; and Sir William Temple bestows a panegyric on Sir Henry Fanshawe's

flower-garden at Ware Park, and his artistic arrangement of colours. "He did so precisely examine the tinctures and seasons of his flowers, that in their settings the inwardest of which that were to come up at the same time should be always a little darker than the utmost, and so serve them for a kind of gentle shadow." Temple also mentions, as the "perfectest figure of a garden" he ever saw, "either at home or abroad," the one made by the Countess of Bedford, who was the theme of Donne and his poetic brethren. It combined every excellence of the antique pleasure-ground; the terrace gravel-walk, three hundred paces long, and broad in proportion; "the border set with standard laurels, and at large distances, which have the beauty of orange-trees, both of flower and fruit;" the stone-steps, in three series, leading to extensive parterres; the fountains and statues and summer-houses; and a cloister facing the south and covered with vines. These, with the ivied balustrade, and

Walls mellowed into harmony by time,

composed a garden that suited, while it encouraged, the meditative temper of our ancestors. Levens, near Milnthorpe in Westmoreland, is a pleasing example; there the horn-beam hedges and the figures in box and holly may still be seen.

The English garden of the sixteenth century was the Latin reproduced. Lord Bacon's walks and topiary work at Gorhambury were reflections of Pliny's Tusculan Villa. The solemn terrace, sloping lawn, little flower-garden, with fountain in the centre, and sculptured trees, were common to both. Evelyn's garden delighted Cowley. Perhaps the antique system had more than one feature worthy of preservation. It is pleasant to look at Pliny, through one of his own amusing letters, sitting in a room shaded by plane-trees, and, like Sidney—

Deaf to noise and blind to light;

or sauntering beneath an embowered walk of vines, so soft that his uncovered feet suffered no inconvenience. Pope describes such a path :—

> There in bright drops the crystal fountains play,
> By laurels shaded from the piercing day;
> Where summer's beauty, midst of winter strays,
> And winter's coolness spite of summer's rays.

And Milton shows our first parents, in Eden, rising with the early dawn to dress the

> —— alleys green,
> *Their walk at noon, with branches overgrown.*

Dryden gratefully commended the garden at DENHAM COURT, which had been planned by Sir William Bowyer; he believed it to be one of the most delicious spots of ground in England, although it contained only five acres. In those pleasant shades Dryden translated the first Georgic, and the greatest part of the last 'Æneid.' Bowyer had been his companion at Cambridge. Few of these quaint gardens are now preserved; but Bacon carried his rich fancy into their beautifying, and suggested, in addition to the common fountain, a bathing pool, which might admit of curious adornment. The bottom was to be "finely paved, and with images; the sides likewise, and withal embellished with coloured glass, and such things of lustre; encompassed also with fine railes of low statues." Spenser has the same thought:—

> —— through the waves one might the bottom see,
> All pav'd beneath with jasper shining bright.

Bacon rejoiced in choicer visions than these, and in gardening, as in philosophy, had the prophetic eye. He foresaw the charm of ornamental scenery, which was to delight the refined taste of another generation. Mason praises him for banishing the crisped knot and artificial foliage, while he restored the ample lawn,

—— to feast the sight
With verdure pure, unbroken, unabridged.

Bacon and Milton were the prophet and the herald, Pope and Addison the reformer and the legislator, of horticulture—Pope in the Spectator, Addison in the Guardian. Neither was a mere theorist. Addison made a few experiments in landscape-decoration at his rural seat, near Rugby; and Pope created a little Elysium at Twickenham. However modern rhymers about green fields may deride him, he loved Nature and understood her charms. In a letter to Richardson, written in the freshness of a summer morning, he invites him to pass the day among his shades, "and as much of the night as a fine moon allows." From the heat of noon he retreated into his grotto—fit haunt for poetry and wood-nymphs! Sails gliding up and down the river cast a faint, vanishing gleam through a sloping arcade of trees; and when the doors of the grotto were closed, the changeful scenery of hills, woods, and boats was reflected on the wall. As the sun sank behind the branches, his terrace tempted him abroad: it commanded the finest reach of the river. At Richmond, in the words of Thomson,

—— the silver Thames first rural grows,
Fair winding up to where the Muses haunt,
In Twit'nam's bowers.

The leafy walks of Ham were opposite, and Petersham-wood lent a dark frame to the bright hill of Richmond, of which the Saxon name, *Shene*, or brilliancy, is so happily descriptive. Not a foot of ground was overlooked or unembellished. Within the small inclosure of five acres, Pope had a charming flower-garden—his own work—an orangery, bowling-green, and vineyard. There he feasted his friends, Swift saying grace, as Dr. Wharton declares, with remarkable devotion:—

'Tis true no turbots dignify my boards,
But gudgeon, flounders, which my Thames affords;
To Hownslow Heath I point, and Banstead Down,



Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own.
From yon old walnut-tree a shower shall fall,
And grapes, long ling'ring on my only wall,
And figs from standard and espalier join.

Nor should that other garden be forgotten, where,

> — through the gloom of Shenstone's fairy grove,
> Maria's urn still breathes the voice of love.

It was the creation and the home of a most accomplished person, who delighted in every refinement of rural taste, and brought elegance into a rustic farm, to

> Grace its lone vales with many a budding rose,
> New founts of bliss disclose,
> Call for refreshing shades, and decorate repose.

Whately gave the best account of the Leasowes. The prospect from the grounds was rich and varied. Immediately under the eye lay the town of Hales Owen. The Wrekin, thirty miles distant, rose clearly above the horizon; a grove overhung a small valley, through which a rivulet flowed, with clusters of open coppice-wood scattered along its banks, and the shadow of every leaf marked on the water. Shenstone had no model to work after, and his zig-zag walk, gilt urn, and other eccentricities, may well be forgiven. But he felt the melancholy complaint of a heart even sadder than his own:

> How ill the scenes that offer rest,
> And hearts, that cannot rest, agree!

"I feed my wild ducks, I water my carnations! happy enough if I could extinguish my ambition quite, or indulge my desire of being something more beneficial in my sphere."

Shenstone's hardest trial was the nearness of Hagley—it was the sonneteer living next door to the epic poet. What was Virgil's Grove compared with the Tinian Lawn, encircled by stately trees, so full of leaf that no branch or stem was visible—nothing but large undulating masses of foliage. How insignificant became all rustic ornament before the solitary urn, chosen by Pope himself for

the spot, afterwards inscribed to his memory, and "shown by a gleam of moonlight through the trees." Whately touches the autumnal beauty of this scene with great sweetness:—"It is delightful to saunter here, and see the grass and gossamer which entwine it glistening with dew; to listen and hear nothing stir, except, perhaps, a withered leaf dropping gently through a tree." The exquisite lines of Thomson are recalled by the imitation:

—— for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove,
Oft startling such as studious walk below.

Grainger told Percy that the home of Shenstone was a paradise, but that his conversation pleased him still better.

By degrees, the influence of taste began to spread. Gardening, like criticism, was taught by the poets. Kent attributes his skill in laying out ground to the study of Spenser. But pictures helped him. In Pope's graceful letter to Lord Burlington, he speaks of

—— Kent, who felt
The pencil's power.

Stowe and Claremont were celebrated by Garth, Thomson, and Walpole: Esher, too, received the praise of the tasteful poet, to whom Kent was deeply indebted for fame and assistance:—

Pleased let me stray in Esher's peaceful grove,
Where Kent and nature vie for Pelham's love.

Brown has also found a niche in poetry. The Italian garden, with its splendid terraces, and arcades, and statues, had been succeeded by the Dutch garden, introduced by William III.; and this, in its turn, yielded to the enterprise of the new reformer. According to Repton, Brown "lived to establish a fashion in gardening, which might have been expected to endure as long as Nature should exist. He copied nature,—his illiterate followers copied him."

Cowper regarded the desolating style of Brown with indignation and contempt:—

> He speaks! the lake in front becomes a lawn,
> Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise.

But he had a good eye for particular effects, and his treatment of water at Blenheim was admirable. "I used to think it," was the lively saying of Walpole, "one of the ugliest places in England; a giant's castle, who had laid waste all the country round him." In the garden-scene, Brown showed his power: he was the reformer of gravel-walks. And even of his clumps and belts a very ingenious explanation has been given; the clump being only an expedient for letting beauty grow up. A friend reminds me of two other improvers of gardens—Mr. Hamilton, who shaped the beautiful grounds at Payne's Hill; and the great Lord Chatham, who in the eagerness of his temper designed lawns by torch-light, and was so careless of expense, that he spread the streams in the little valleys of Kent and Middlesex into lakes, and covered the hills of Somersetshire with cedars that he sent from the nurseries of London.

One charm of an English garden is quite peculiar to it—the freshness and the beauty of the turf. The grass-plot is as much our own as the green hedge. Throughout Italy—with the single exception of Caserta—the bright English colour is unknown. Nor is France much more favoured. In our own times a grass-plot at the Chateau d'Eu was 'turfed' from Salisbury Plain. Chaucer frequently mentions the fresh English green, and especially in "the Flower and the Leaf:"—

> And at the last a path of little brede
> I found, that greatly had not used be;
> For it forgrowen was with grasse and weede,
> That wel unneth a wighte might it se:
> Thought I, 'This path some whider goth, parde!'

And so I followed, till it me brought
To right a pleasaunt herber, well ywrought,
That benched was, and with turfes newe
Freshly turved, whereof the grene gras,
So smale, so thicke, so shorte, so fresh of hewe,
That most like unto grene wool, wot I, it was:
The hegge also that yede in compas,
And closed in al the grene herbere,
With sicamour was set and eglatere.

Perhaps the quiet courts of our Colleges present the finest specimens of grass; and the meadows behind Trinity and Clare are abundantly rich and verdant. There wantons the "pad" of the modern abbot—

His sleek sides bathing in the dewy green.

Happy is he in his labour and his rest. No commission disturbs his stall. He cares not for corn-laws, watched over by the benevolent eye of the Bursar; and in the warm twilight of a June evening, it is very pleasant to hear him leisurely pattering home under the dim avenue of limes.

The picturesque tourist in England may find numerous pleasure-grounds to reward his industry. It will be sufficient to specify the Chinese garden at Cassiobury, famous in Evelyn's time, with conservatory and pagoda full of porcelain, mandarins, paintings, and gold fish, all set off by large tea-plants; the antique flower-garden at Hatfield, Lord Salisbury's, with its walks over-arched by clipped lime-trees; the rock-garden of Lady Broughton, who spent eight years in its composition; and of the late Mr. Wells, at Red-Leaf, where Nature herself is the most liberal and accomplished contributor. The chief beauty of White Knights, now broken up, arose from the display of exotics, and the variegated flush of colour.

One word on London gardens may not be uninteresting. No passage in the Task is more familiar to poetic ears, than the

description of the citizen's delight in a glimpse of flowers on his wall:

> The villas with which London stands begirt,
> Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
> Prove it.
> A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
> To sooth the rich possessor, much consoled
> That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
> Or nightshade, or valerian, grace the wall
> He cultivates.

But a great change has come over the London gardens since Cowper's day. The late Mr. Loudon drew attention to the costly plants often found in them. He gave this explanation:—The gardens of suburban streets are planted by speculative builders, and chiefly from nursery sales, which have been very frequent during the last twenty or thirty years. It is the custom at these auctions to mix rare with common plants, that the former may sell the latter. In this way, the choicest specimens have found their way into the grass plots of cottage-villas, or the humbler row.

I have not spoken of the moral influence of a garden; but it is lively and lasting. Is there not a holy truth in the Angel's admonition to Esdras (11, ix., 24-5), "Go into a field of flowers where no house is builded, and eat only the flowers of the field; taste no flesh, drink no wine, but eat flowers only. And pray unto the Highest continually—then will I come and talk with thee." "Happy they who can create a rose, or erect a honeysuckle." The remark is Gray's; and history furnishes touching testimony to its truth. When Hough visited Sancroft in Suffolk, he found him working in his garden: "Almost all you see," said the good old man, "is the work of my own hands, though I am bordering on eighty years of age. My old woman does the weeding, and John mows the turf and digs for me; but all the nicer

work—the sowing, grafting, budding, transplanting, and the like —I trust to no other hand but my own—so long, at least, as my



health will allow me to enjoy so pleasing an occupation; and, in good sooth, the fruits here taste more sweet, and the flowers have a richer perfume, than they had at Lambeth." If Sancroft could

have foreseen the Task, he would have heard his own voice reflected in the writer's account of his rustic labours:

> —— no works, indeed,
> That ask robust tough sinews, bred to toil,
> Servile employ; but such as may amuse,
> Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.

Though a mightier hand than Cowper's had long before, in a magnificent history-piece, exhibited the earliest gardeners of the world reposing after their toil—

> Under a tuft of shade that on the green
> Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain side
> They sat them down; and after no more toil
> Of their sweet gard'ning labour than sufficed
> To recommend cool zephyr, and made ease
> More easy.

We have, in our gallery of literature, two celebrated personages—who were always longing for country seclusion, and at length obtained what they sought—Cowley and Bolingbroke. Perhaps this wish was the only point of agreement between them. "I never had any other desire," wrote the poet to Evelyn, "so like to covetousness as that one which I have always had—that I might be the master at last of a small house and large garden, and there dedicate the remainder of my life only to the culture of flowers and the study of nature." The lover of sweet fancies has reason to regret that Cowley did not find the Eden which he anticipated, nor live to make it what he hoped; for he had the "inward eye which is the bliss of solitude," and discovered the Maker in the meanest flower or weed by the hedge-row.

These verses, especially those in Italics, seem to enfold the whole system of Mr. Wordsworth—to be at once its text and compendium. Cowley is writing to Evelyn about a garden:

> Where does the Wisdom and the Power Divine
> In a more bright and sweet reflection shine?

Where do we finer strokes and colours see,
Of the Creator's real Poetry,
Than when we with attention look
Upon the third day's volume of the Book!
If we could open and intend our eye,
We all, like Moses, should espy
Ev'n in a bush the radiant Deity.
But we despise these, His inferior ways,
(Though no less full of miracle and praise,)
Upon the flowers of heaven we gaze,
The stars of earth no wonder in us raise.

When Boswell mentioned to Johnson the saying of Shenstone, that Pope had the art beyond any other writer of condensing sense, Johnson replied: "It is not true, sir; there is more sense in a line of Cowley than in a page of Pope." He might have enlarged this criticism in his Life of Cowley: other poets may be read; he is to be studied. The fruitfulness of his fancy blinds the reader to the strength of his intellect; as in tropical woods, the trunk of the tree is hidden by the tall grass and plants that climb up and encircle it.

In Cowley, the feeling for gardens, trees, and fountains was natural and sincere. He was one

—— whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure;

but it is worth remarking, that the complaint of his touching line—

Business, that contradiction of my fate,

was breathed long before by Bacon.—(*De Aug. Sci.* 1. viii. c. 3.)

By the side of Cowley, Bolingbroke looks like Fiction holding the hand of Truth; upon his lips, affection for the country was a sigh after flowers upon the stage. However, into woods and fields he went—everything was to be rural; the walls of his house were painted with implements of husbandry, done in black crayon. "I am in my farm," he wrote to Swift; "and here I shoot strong and

tenacious roots. I have caught hold of the earth, to use a gardener's phrase, and neither my friends nor my enemies will find it an easy matter to transplant me again." Is it ungenerous to couple with Bolingbroke's affected love of gardens, the delight of Walpole in planting beeches and chestnuts at Houghton? "My flatterers," he wrote to General Churchill, "are mutes; they will not lie. I, in return, with sincerity admire them; and have as many beauties about me as fill up all my hours without dangling; and no disgrace attends me from the age of sixty-seven." There is, truly, a fortitude to be learned of that schoolmistress, whom God employs to guide His children towards Himself—a high and noble sense of the soul's dignity, which makes it her privilege—

> Through all the years of this our life, to lead
> From joy to joy; for she can so inform
> The mind that is within us, so impress
> With quietness and beauty, and so feed
> With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
> Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
> Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life,
> Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
> Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings;

but this wisdom is not taught in the academy of the Infidel, or the Plotter.

My notes on gardens have swelled into an essay, and I can only say one word on their relationship to the pencil. Among ourselves, landscape-gardening is confined within narrow boundaries. Few parts of England furnish materials for representing the pictures of S. Rosa, Claude, and the Poussins. Occasional situations may give the scenes of Ruysdael, Berghem, and Pinaker; while Hobbema, Waterloo, and A. Vandervelt may be copied wherever trees, lanes, and water are found. Walpole included Claude in the list, but we have neither his architecture nor sunshine.

May 16th.

I called in, the other day, a little debt that has been owing, for a long time, from Mr. Rogers to Bishop Warburton. This morning



I came upon another, which ought to stand in the name of the great poetical capitalist of the seventeenth century. Mr. Rogers,

in his delightful fragment, Human Life, portrays the joyous indolence that sometimes creeps over us in youth, when there is balm in the blood as well as in the air :—

> Yet, all forgot, how oft the eyelids close,
> *And from the slack hand drops the gathered rose!*

The last is a most exquisite line, altogether golden, but melted from Milton's ore ; as may be seen by turning to the ninth book of Paradise Lost. Adam, waiting the return of Eve,

> —— had wove
> Of choicest flowers a garland to adorn
> Her tresses, and her rural labours crown.

At length, weary of suspense, wondering at her long stay, and with a foreboding at his heart of coming evil, he goes forth in search of her, and meets her returning from the Tree of Knowledge, with a bough of fruit in her hand. Eve anticipates his questions by relating the history of her temptation. Adam shrinks back in astonishment and horror—

> *From his slack hand* the garland wreath'd for Eve
> *Down dropt,* and all the *faded roses shed.*

Here, as in a verse of Mr. Rogers previously quoted, the elegance of the application lends a secondary kind of originality to the borrower. La Bruyère acutely remarked of Boileau, whose imitations are numerous, that he seemed to create the thoughts of other people—so ingenious are the turns which he gives to a simile or expression. He steals the gold, but the shaping of it is his own. We may never look upon a writer, worthy of fame, and owing nothing to his ancestors. To speak in the unimprovable language of Dryden—"We shall track him everywhere in the snow of the ancients."

May 17th.

In the history of Art, we meet with a small but ingenious band of men who are known as flower-painters. The garden is their studio, and tulips, or roses, are their favourite sitters. Sometimes the floral features and charms are transferred with the dewy gracefulness of life. The pencil catches the bloom from the sunny wall. One English poet has produced pen-and-ink sketches of rare brilliancy; I refer to Darwin. He was not only, in the compliment of Cowper, the harmonist of Flora's court, but her artist in ordinary. His descriptions sparkle with flower-gold, and the finger seems to rub the colour off the page, like the crimson meal from the wings of the butterfly.

Flower-painting in words has never become a distinct branch of poetic art, every master of language having in some measure cultivated it. Shakespere scattered his violets over the hearse of tragedy; Spenser rejoiced in lilies; Milton in all trees, leaves, and perfumes; Thomson found words of many colours for the weeds and flowers of hedge-rows; Cowper's fancy brightened as he lingered under the woodbine, or the glittering laburnum.

"I have some favourite flowers in spring," Burns wrote to a friend, "among which are the mountain-daisy, harebell, and foxglove; the wild brier-rose, and budding and hoary hawthorn, I view and hang over with peculiar delight." And so he sang in his sweet pastoral verses—

> Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
> Where bright beaming summers exalt the perfume;
> Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green bracken,
> Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom.
> Far dearer to me yon humble broom bowers,
> Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen.

Campbell could read a landscape in the mild looks of the primrose; and Wordsworth's affection for the daisy is quite characteristic of his poetry. Perhaps the following are two of the most charming flower-pieces in our language:—

THOMSON.

Fair-handed Spring unbosoms every grace:
Throws out the snowdrop and the crocus first,
The daisy, primrose, violet darkly blue,
And polyanthus of unnumbered dyes;
The yellow wall-flower stain'd with iron brown;
And lavish stock, that scents the garden round;
From the soft wing of vernal breezes shed,
Anemones; auriculas, enrich'd
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves;
And full ranunculus, of glowing red.
Then comes the tulip-race, where Beauty plays
Her idle freaks; from family diffused
To family, as flies the father-dust,
The varied colours run.

— Hyacinths, of purest virgin-white,
Low bent, and blushing inward; nor jonquils,
Of potent fragrance; nor narcissus fair,
As o'er the fabled fountain hanging still;
Nor broad carnations; nor gay spotted pinks;
Nor, shower'd from every bush, the damask-rose.

COWPER.

— Laburnum, rich
In streaming gold; syringa, iv'ry pure;
The scentless and the scented rose: this red,
And of an humbler growth, the other, tall,
And throwing up into the darkest gloom
Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf
That the wind severs from the broken wave.
The lilac, various in array, now white,
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved
Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;
Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late;
Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm
Of flowers, like flies, clothing her slender rods,
That scarce a leaf appears.

The auricula was brought to our sheltered lawns from the snowy moss of the Swiss Alps. Of the ranunculus an anecdote is told by the traveller Tournefort:—Mahomet IV., with a passion for the chase, combined a love of flowers, and particularly of the ranunculus. His vizir, the Casa Mustapha of the siege of Vienna,

anxious to wean his master from more hazardous amusements, subjected the empire to a horticultural inquisition. Every Pacha was ordered to send seeds and roots of the finest species of the Sultan's favourite to Constantinople. Accordingly, the secluded courts of the seraglio soon began to shine with the richest flowers from Cyprus, Aleppo, and Smyrna. In process of time, the ambassadors at the Turkish court procured specimens for their respective sovereigns, and the ranunculus reared its head in all the royal gardens of Europe. Next to the rose it seems to be the most expansive name in botany. Of one sort, florists reckon eight hundred varieties. But our obligations to the East are not limited to the ranunculus; the tuber rose and lily reached us from India and Persia towards the close of the sixteenth century. Beckman thinks that the taste for flowers travelled into Europe from the same countries. The first tulip opened its gorgeous eyes in a Turkish garden. It grows wild in the Levant.

For pleasant sentiment on flowers, I like these verses of Elliott:—

Flowers! ye remind me of rock, vale, and wood,
Haunts of my early days, and still loved well,—
Bloom not your sisters fair in Locksley's dell?
And where the sun o'er purple moorlands wild
Gilds Wharncliffe's oak, while Don is dark below?
And where the blackbird sings on Rother's side?
And where Time spares the age of Conisbro'?
Sweet flowers, remember'd well! your hues, your breath,
Call up the dead to combat still with death,
The spirits of my buried years arise!
Again a child, where childhood roved I run,
While groups of speedwell, with their bright blue eyes,
Like happy children, cluster in the sun.
Still the wan primrose hath a golden core;
The mill-foil, thousand-leafed as heretofore,
Displays a little world of flowerets grey;
And tiny maids might hither come to cull
The woe-marked cowslip of the dewy May;

And still the fragrant thorn is beautiful.
I do not dream! Is it indeed a rose
That yonder in the deepening sunset glows?
Methinks the orchis of the fountained wold
Hath in its well-known beauty something new.
Do I not know thy lofty disk of gold,
Thou that still wooed the sun with passion true?
No, splendid stranger! haply I have seen
One not unlike thee, but with humbler mien,
Watching her Lord.
—— Lo! this fringed flower,
That round the cottage window weaves a bower,
Is not the woodbine; but that lowlier one,
With thick green leaves, and spike of dusky fire,
Enamoured of the thatch it grows upon,
Might be the house-leek of rude Hallamshire,
And would awake, beyond divorcing seas,
Thoughts of green England's peaceful cottages.
Yes, and this blue-eyed child of earth that bends
Its head on leaves with liquid diamonds set,
A heavenly fragrance in its sighing sends;
And though 'tis not our downcast violet,
Yet might it haply to the zephyr tell
That 'tis beloved by village maids as well.

MAY 20TH.

A VISITOR to Wales, in the early part of the present century, objected to the description, in the Bard, of the "foaming Conway;" and having imagined an error, he suggests this occasion of it:— Gray probably supposed the Conway to resemble the mountain torrents of Wales, of which the course is troubled and impetuous, although observation would have informed him that the Conway flows in a tranquil current through the valley. This is sufficiently well. But Gray knew the Conway and its character. He chose a moment of tempest for the action of the Ode, and treated the river with poetic liberty. The storm lashed the water into foam; and the hoary hair of the Minstrel, standing upon the rock—

Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air.

The scene is full of agitation and dismay. Titian's noble landscape of St. Peter the Martyr is recalled to the mind. The sudden gust of wind, tossing out the robe of the Dominican, corresponds with the tumultuous attitude of the poet.



Bishop Percy was more justly accused of a mistake like that imputed to Gray. In the romance of Don Alonzo de Aguilar, contained in the Reliques, he translates Rio Verde, "gentle river;" but we are informed by travellers, that Green River is as much the name of the water where the skirmish happened, as Blackwall is of the reach of the Thames where people go to eat white-bait.

A topographical error has been pointed out in a writer, whose minute truthfulness of local description is generally surprising. At the western extremity of the Gulf of Naples are two islands, Procida and Ischia, of which the second is rocky, appearing to rise up in a cone from the lowlands of the former. Yet Virgil, who was familiar with the scenery as Johnson with the flow of Fleet Street, reverses or transposes the characteristic epithet.

MAY 22ND.

JOHNSON and Thomson had two feelings in common—a passion for wall-fruit and lying in bed. The philosopher ate seven or eight large peaches before breakfast, and renewed the acquaintance at dinner with equal enthusiasm. He said that once in his life, at Ormbersley, the seat of Lord Sandys, he had enough fruit. The poet sketches himself:—

> Here as I steal along the sunny wall,
> Where Autumn basks with fruit empurpled deep,
> My pleasing theme continual prompts my thought;
> Presents the downy peach; the shining plum;
> The ruddy, fragrant nectarine; and dark,
> Beneath his ample leaf, the luscious fig.

There was, however, a refinement in Thomson's appetite quite unknown to his critic. He delighted to draw down the rich plum, with the blue on it, into his mouth without the help of his hands, which hung listlessly in his pockets. Johnson's love of plums betrayed him into an amusing extravagance. When he was in the Isle of Skye, the conversation turning on the advantage of wearing linen, he said that the juice from a plum-tree on the fingers was not disagreeable, because it was a vegetable substance.

The other coincidence was in panegyrics of early rising: "I tell all young people," wrote Johnson, "and tell them with great sincerity, that nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good." Meanwhile, in his diary, April, 1765, he confesses a general habit of lying in bed until two o'clock in the afternoon. The poet's theory and practice were not closer. His famous apostrophe—

Falsely luxurious, will not man awake!

would have startled nobody more than his own servant. Good Mrs. Carter—skilful in translating Epictetus, and making a pudding, and who lived to the verge of ninety years—always rose at six, and left a pleasant admonition for sleepy readers:—

The poets will tell you a deal of Aurora,
And how much she improves all the beauties of Flora;
Though you need believe neither the poets nor me,
But convince your own senses, and get up and see.

May 25th.

I have been impressed by a remark of Professor Wilson, in Mill's History of India, that people who declaim against the tyranny of caste, should recollect its compensations. The caution need not be limited to the Hindus. Whatever be the varieties of human states and fortunes, some fine turn of the balance makes them equal. The scale is in the hand of God. The thrush sings in the cottager's garden, and the skeleton hangs behind the gold tapestry. Even the mute creation clears up dark passages in the economy of the intellectual. For one gift bestowed, another is taken away. The bird of paradise has coarse legs. The eye of the bat is too weak for the gloom it inhabits; therefore the sense

of touch is quickened; it sees with its feet, and easily and safely guides itself in the swiftest flight. The sloth has a similar provision. Look at it on the ground, and you wonder at the grotesque freaks of nature; but follow it up a tree; watch it suspending its body by the hooked toes, and swinging from bough to bough, and you perceive its organization to be exactly suited to its wants. Paley notices the same principle of compensation in the elephant and crane. The short unbending neck of the first receives a remedy in the flexible trunk; the long legs of the second enable it to wade where the structure of its feet prevents it from swimming.

The changes of light and shade are tempered to insect sensibility. In the deserts of the Torrid Zone, the setting sun calls up myriads of little creatures, that would perish in its full brightness: while, in the wintry solitudes of the North, sunset is the signal for repose. The lesson of compensation is taught by the humming of flies along the hedges. The flutterer of a day has no reason to complain of the shortness of its life. It was a thought of Malebranche, that the ephemera may regard a minute, as we look upon a year. The delusion is the recompense. Mr. Landor touches this subject very beautifully in his Imaginary Conversation between Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney. The former remarks, under an oak at Penshurst, "What a hum of satisfaction in God's creatures! How is it the smallest do seem the happiest?" And his friend answers him: "Compensation for their weakness and their fears; compensation for the shortness of their existence. Their spirits mount upon the sunbeam above the eagle; they have more enjoyment in their one summer, than the elephant in his century."

And if we turn to the history and fortunes of men, a long series of balances keeps opening on the eye. The ear alone might be a motto for an essay. In South America, a cicada is heard a mile;

a man only a few yards. Kirby has calculated that, if the voice increased in volume proportionably to the size of the body, it would resound over the world. Every inch must deepen the thunder; and two giants might converse with ease from the Thames and the Ganges. If the return of monsters might be calculated like that of comets, the slightest enlargement of stature would be watched with apprehension, and an island with one man of ten feet in it be altogether uninhabitable. Pope did not forget this providential adaptation of the ear to happiness:—

> If Nature thundered in his opening ears,
> And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
> How would he wish that Heaven had left him still
> The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill.

Who will complain that he is more inaudible than the grasshopper?

Man has another compensation in the delicacy of his ear. Dugald Stewart remarked of the warbling of birds, that it gives pleasure to none of the quadrupeds; nor is it even certain if the music of one species gratifies another. Who ever heard a sparrow pause in his impertinent chirp, because a lark sprang wavering into song over his head? Against this argument it has been objected, that the canary often learns the nightingale's notes; that young birds adopt the song of their foster-parent; and that the jay has been heard to warble the robin's tune, which it had learned entirely by its own ear, and love of music. These examples do not refute the saying of the philosopher. In certain birds imitation is an instinct. The question must be decided upon the general principles of observation. If an exquisite singer were suddenly, in the midst of the most ignorant rustics, to burst into the full swell and cadence of harmony, there would be a hush and wonder of delight. But

who supposes the owl to consider its hooting less agreeable than the chant of the nightingale?

We have sublimer illustrations of the theory.

The Bible is a history of compensation. The prophecies of the New Covenant were uttered in seasons of depression—at the fall of Adam, the separation of Abraham, the bondage of Israel, the giving of the Law by Moses, the captivity of Babylon. Cloud and rainbow appear together. There is wisdom in the saying of Feltham, that the whole creation is kept in order by discord, and that vicissitude maintains the world. Many evils bring many blessings. Manna drops in the wilderness—corn grows in Canaan. Rarely two afflictions, or two trials, console or trouble us at the same time. Human life is the Prophet's declaration drawn out into examples:—"*God stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind.*"

And one curious and beautiful feature of the Divine scheme of compensation is seen in the making of our joys to be born of our sorrows. The chamber of sickness sows the lane with flowers. A man seated in his garden, or tottering down a green field, might suppose himself transported into the morning and sunlight of creation:—

> The common air, the earth, the skies,
> To him are opening Paradise.

Plato relates that Socrates, on the day of his death, being in the company of his disciples, began to rub his leg, which had been galled by the chain, and mentioned the pleasurable sensations in the released member. The Greek prison represents the world; the philosopher, the Christian; the fetters, the calamities of life. When one of these is loosened, the soul experiences a feeling of delight. It is the leg of Socrates unchained. The iron enters into the soul, and a loving hand closes the wound. St. Paul told the Corinthians, that when he came to Macedonia his flesh had no rest:

without, were fightings; within, were fears; but God comforted him by "the coming of Titus." So it is ever.

The future of a man is his recompense; something is promised, which he desired; or something is withdrawn, of which he complained. Compensation is abridged in Hope. The Eskino, who numbers among his treasures a plank of a tree, cast by the ocean currents on his desolate shores, sees in the moon plains overshadowed by majestic forests; the Indian of the Oroonoko expects to find in the same luminary green and boundless savannas, where people are never stung by moschittoes. Thus the chain of compensation encircles the world.

MAY 28TH.

MUCH amused with Fortune's Wanderings in China, the book for a wet day in the country. He has something to say, and says it. Gutzlaff had complained of the ill-behaviour of the Chinese in their temples; the official persons taking no interest in the religious ceremony, but staring at the European strangers. Fortune doubts the general truth of the story, and recommends us to make a corresponding experiment in England. Let me sketch a scene. While the choir is scraping into tune, the bassoon grumbles, and the flute utters its first scream, let the church-doors open, and display, leisurely pacing up the chancel and under the scared eyes of the clerk, a small-footed lady, with eyes to match, from Pekin; or a Mandarin, a peacock-feather mounted in his hat, wearing a purple spencer embroidered with gold, a rosary of stones and coral round his neck, and a long tail, exquisitely braided, dangling down his shoulders. Imagine the apparition to seat himself in the pew of the squire; and then, by way of refreshment, to draw from the

embroidered purse, always suspended at the girdle, a snuff-bottle of porcelain or coloured glass, and lay a small portion of fragrant dust in the left hand, at the lower joint of the thumb. After these preliminaries, suppose him, with that inward sense of merit which may be recognised even in our parochial snuff-takers, to lift the pinch to his nose. Where have been the eyes of the congregation during these mystic ceremonies? I shall not presume to conjecture.

In truth, appearances are not always to be trusted. A recent traveller in Canada was on a hunting-excursion with a party of Indians; before retiring to sleep, all knelt in prayer, rosary in hand. But the dogs, which, to increase their fierceness, had been kept fasting, came prowling into the cabin; and one happened to touch the heel of the Indian whose look was the devoutest and most self-absorbed. He immediately turned round to eject the intruder; and showering a volley of French imprecations, finally drove it out with circumstances of peculiar indignity. Having accomplished this feat, he took a long pull at his pipe, and resumed his prayers.

JUNE 1ST.

ONE seldom reads Fontenelle in these swarming book-days; but what a charm there is in his works! His scientific portraits are so simple and life-like; and then how tasteful are the frames—never gaudy, but setting off the complexion. Voltaire said that the ignorant understood, and the learned admired him. No French author has introduced more elegant turns of speech, or embellished a narrative with gracefuller images. His Éloges are models in their way. Speaking of the long illness of Malebranche, he calls him a calm spectator of his own death. The sketch of Leibnitz contains two or three choice touches. He says that to appreciate

the extent of the philosopher's genius, we must "decompose his character," and survey it in its elements. In this Éloge has been discovered the original of a very beautiful phrase of modern geology —"Des coquillages pétrifiés dans les terres, des pierres où se trouvent des empreintes de poissons, ou de plantes, et même de poissons et de plantes, qui ne sont point du pays; *Médailles incontestables du Déluge.*" I met with an early trace of the metaphor in a letter from Henry Baker, the naturalist, to Dr. Doddridge: "And as ancient coins and medals struck by mighty princes, in remembrance of their exploits, are highly valued as evidences of such facts, no less ought these *fossil marine bodies to be considered as medals of the Almighty*, fully proving the desolation he has formerly brought upon the earth."

But, with all his graces, Fontenelle was a Frenchman. He often flutters into epigram; and, with the ingenuity of our own Cowley, shares his sparkling conceits and inverted fancies; and, like him, he softened the most rugged tempers. He won the kind looks of Warburton, who admired his prose comedies, which the author intended for a posthumous appearance. But, as he pleasantly observes, his length of life—he almost completed a century—having quite exhausted his patience, he determined to wait no longer, and relieved his executors of the publication by undertaking it himself.

JUNE 3RD.

STANDING under this lime-tree, every bough utters its own sermon. The shadowy motion on the grass preaches. In the world nothing is still. The earth moves; small things and great obey the law; and this chequered turf, to which I am giving a fainter green with the pressure of my feet, goes round the sun as swiftly as the vast forests of America.

The elements are always changing. So is society. A merchant, his speculations hardened into gold, swells up a lord; or, blown into air, disappears in smoke. Nothing but the Christian mind is unaffected by this circular motion and variableness. I recollect an illustration in a black folio of the seventeenth century, rich as usual in conceits, controversy, grandeur, and Greek: As a watch, though tossed up and down by the agitation of him who carries it, does not, on that account, undergo any perturbation or disorder in the working of the spring and wheels within, so the true Christian heart, however shaken by the joltings it meets with in the pressure and tumult of the world, suffers no derangement in the adjustment and action of its machinery. The hand still points to eternity.

JUNE 5TH.

THERE is one passage in Langhorne so immeasurably superior to any other in his works, that the reader is disposed to transfer to him Gray's doubt, whether "Nugent wrote his own ode." It occurs in the Country Justice, at the close of an appeal on behalf of unfortunate vagrants:—

> Perhaps on some inhospitable shore,
> The houseless wretch a widow'd parent bore,
> Who then, no more by golden prospects led,
> Of the poor Indian begg'd a leafy bed.
> Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolv'd in dew;
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> *The child of misery baptized in tears.*

The last line is one of the most pathetic in poetry. In the Jesuit Bonhour's collection of Thoughts from the Fathers, I found

the following apostrophe of St. Leon: "Heureux *vos larmes*, saint Apostre, qui, pour effacer le péché que vous commistes en renonceant votre Maître, *eurent la vertu d'un sacre baptisme.*" Donne (Serm. cxxxi.) has the same image: "The tears themselves shall be the sign; the tears shall be ambassadours of joy; a present gladness shall consecrate your sorrow, and *tears shall baptize and give a new name to your passion.*" The coincidence deserves notice.

A pleasant and well-known anecdote is connected with these verses. On one occasion Walter Scott, a lad of fifteen, was in the company of Burns, at Edinburgh. There happened to be in the room a print by Bunbury, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting on one side, and his widow, with a child in her arms, on the other. The lines of Langhorne were written beneath. Burns shed tears at the print, and inquired after the author of the inscription. Scott was the only person who knew his name; he whispered it to a friend, who told it to Burns; and he rewarded the future minstrel of Scotland "with a look and a word," which in days of glory and fame were remembered with pride.

The name of Langhorne was faintly revived by the publication of Hannah More's Memoirs; but he is chiefly known in connexion with those mightier spirits, to whose youthful ears his musical rhymes were pleasing. His flute had two or three harmonious notes; and he was one of the earliest embellishers of "the short and simple annals of the poor."

JUNE 7TH.

GLANCED at the new letters of Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, and noticed the strange likeness to Gray in manner and expression, extending even to phrases and idioms. The affectation of both is

very amusing, Walpole being the more manly. "I went the other day," he wrote, "to Scarlet's, to buy green spectacles; he was mighty assiduous to give me a pair that would not tumble my hair. 'Lord, sir,' said I, 'when one is come to wear spectacles, what signifies how one looks!'" Gray underwent great annoyance on this very account. A concealed double eyeglass was the nearest approach to spectacles that his delicacy could endure. I observe, likewise, in the poet a fondness for banter and smartness on serious subjects, which is extremely disagreeable. He probably caught the disease from Walpole, who told Cole that he would not give threepence for Newton's work on the Prophecies.

The literary character of Walpole has been drawn by himself in a few words: "I am a composition of Anthony Wood, and Madame Danoi the fairy-tale writer." This is true. He had much of the minute learning, but none of the dust of the antiquary. He always appears to us intellectually, as he did to Hannah More bodily, in a primrose suit and silk stockings. His memory is crowded with rubbish, but he hangs some little *genre* piece in the corner. No writer of his time presents such curious happiness of phrase. "Pictures are but the scenery of devotion;" Versailles is "a lumber of littleness." I admire Walpole, but who can love him? Of the earth, every word and thought smell of it. His irreligion is not extremely obtrusive. He was a well-dressed scoffer of refined manners; a kind of English Voltaire, abridged and lettered, with gilt leaves, and elegantly tooled.

JUNE 9TH.

STOOD on the root-bridge in the fading lights of evening, and listened with pensive sadness to the chimes from Aberleigh, while the swans,

—— in their white-chested pride,
Rushing and racing come to meet me at the water-side.



Just one year ago, in the "leafy month of June," I heard the same sounds of mirth and melancholy, and said then, as now—

How soft the music of those village bells.
Falling at intervals upon the ear
In cadence sweet.

There is solemn and touching truth in the remark of Pope, that every year carries away something beloved and precious; not destroying, nor effacing, but removing it into a soft and visionary twilight. Poussin's picture of a tomb in Arcadia is the last year in a parable.

It is in the nature of bells to bring out this tone of mournfulness. Every chime has its connecting toll. Each week locks the gate of its predecessor, and keeps the key. Thus it becomes a monument which the old sexton Time watches over. Beautiful it is, indeed, when studded with the rich jewels of wise hours and holy minutes! Most magnificent of sepulchres! The dust of our own creations—our hopes, thoughts, virtues, and sins—is to us the costliest deposit in the burial-ground of the world. How appalling would be the resurrection of a year, a month, or a week, with the secret history of every man open in its hand—a diary of the heart, to be read by its own flame! If childhood could be the granary of youth, youth of manhood, manhood of old age—the year gone being continually brought back to cherish, strengthen, and support the year coming—then might the Grecian story of filial piety receive a new and nobler fulfilment, in the wasted virtue of manhood invigorated by the life-giving current of our youth; in the feebleness and exhaustion of the parent, renewed by the glowing bosom of the child!

The steeple of Aberleigh teaches me a great lesson—to strengthen a good disposition into a habit. The relationship between the two is close and beautiful. Habits are the daughters of action, but they nurse their mother, and give birth to daughters after her image, more lovely and fruitful. The saying is Jeremy Taylor's. The use of our time is the criterion of our state, and our wages will be paid by the clock. Sterne, whose life was only a journey of sentiment, has nevertheless made

a wise remark in one of his gossiping letters: "If you adopt the rule of writing every evening your remarks on the past day, it will be a kind of *tête-à-tête* between you and yourself, wherein you may sometimes become your own monitor."

This "gradual dusky veil" of evening reminds me that the road of time has taken a new turn. Let me recollect the admonition of a famous man, that the humblest persons are bound to give an account of their leisure; and, in the midst of solitude, to be of some use to society. Very grand and true are the lines of Herrick:—

> Who by his gray hairs doth his lustres tell,
> Lives not those years, but he that lives them well.
> One man has reach'd his sixty years; but he
> Of all those three-score has not lived half three.
> He lives, who lives to virtue; men, who cast
> Their ends for pleasure, do not live, but last.

This meditation on a woodland bridge ought not to be fruitless. The spare minutes of a year are mighty architects, if kept to their work. They overthrow, and build up; dig, or empty. There is a tradition in Barbary that the sea was once absorbed by ants.

No pyramid may rise under the busy labour of our swarming thoughts. Be not cast down. We read of those who had toiled all night, that, "as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread." It was a lone and dreary shore; yet an unexpected flame cheered, and a strange Visitor walked along it. The chimes of ages promise the same food and light to me. In this dark, troubled sea of life, I may row up and down all night and catch nothing; but at last the net will be let down for a great draught. A clear fire burns, and a rich supper is spread upon the calm shore of the future. The haven shines in the distance. Happy! if I leave behind me the short epitaph—

> Proved by the ends of being, to have been!

JUNE 13TH.

BEGAN Mr. Keble's Latin lectures, the fruit of his professorship at Oxford. He discovers an interesting variety of expression in the rural temper of Lucretius and Virgil; one retiring to investigate the mysteries, the other to enjoy the beauties of Nature. The first lifts her veil as an anatomist; the second, as a lover. Virgil might desire to imitate, as he certainly wished to honour, the genius of his predecessor; but he left his difficult paths. He felt that, for his own hand, sweeter flowers, and of brighter colours, grew in the sheltered recesses of the hills.

It seems to be ascertained that, in the year in which Lucretius died at Athens, Virgil, assuming the Virile Toga, quitted Cremona for Rome. The melancholy fate of his contemporary could not but touch his heart, and the allusion to suicide, in the sixth book of the Æneid, breathes the pathos of affection; nor may it be unjust to discover, in the sunnier tone of Virgil's colouring, and the general gaiety of his manner, a designed antidote for the gloom and austerity of his rival in the art.

A particular charm of Virgil's poetry resides in this engaging freshness and buoyancy, connected, as they are, with tender recollections of early life. He imparts the feeling to the characters of his poem. The wounded soldier lifts his closing eyes to heaven, and expires with the remembrance of Argos.

Virgil continually alludes to familiar places—Lucretius, never. Mr. Keble thinks that the most diligent eye would be unable to discover in his poetry the name of one mountain, or river, introduced by the impulse of love and memory. Virgil, on the contrary, seeks to revive his associations. Mantua and Cremona supply his landscapes. The neighbouring streams of Mincius, Athesis, and

Eridanus, and the remote summits of the Alps and Apennines, blend, however unconsciously, with every scene. Mr. Keble places the attraction of the first and ninth Bucolics in their relationship to the poet's haunts. He ventures to pour the beloved Eridanus into the laurel-groves of Elysium. In like manner, he compares Æneas, in his last conflict, to the crest of the Apennines, over which he had so often seen the sun go down from the green and pastoral dwelling of his youth. Dryden makes a most happy remark upon Virgil's early poetry:—"He could not forbear to try his wings; though his wings were not hardened to maintain a long laborious flight, yet sometimes they bore him to a pitch as lofty as ever he was able to reach afterwards. But when he was admonished by his subject to descend, he came down, gently circling in the air and singing, to the ground; like a lark, melodious in her mounting, and continuing her song till she alights; still preparing for a higher flight at her next sally, and tuning her voice to better music." And Pope said,—"It is difficult to find out any fault in Virgil's Eclogues, or Georgicks; he could not bear to have any in his Æneid, and therefore ordered it to be burnt."

Lucretius, as a painter of word-landscape, appears to excel in his air of mystery, and in the various accidents of light. In the second quality he is equalled by Virgil, Dante, and our own Spenser; but in the first, the Commedia of the Florentine affords the only parallel, in its dim windings of forest-paths, that send a "sleepy horror through the blood."

The landscapes of Virgil may be reflected in the blue skies, unshaken leaves, sunny turf, and golden waters of Claude; while the dark perspective and oracular branches of Lucretius must be sought in the sombre masses and awful twilight of Poussin. Those trees, stretching into spectral shade, thrill the beholder with some dreadful catastrophe working out in the gloom. I may

mention "Abraham journeying to sacrifice his son," in our National Gallery, as embodying the tone of a Lucretian picture. With regard to the delightful descriptions of light, under different manifestations, we are to remember that the philosophy and temper of Lucretius led him to contemplate the atmospheric changes with a lingering eye: to watch the villager, from the blue hamlet in the vine-covered hills, going forth to his work; or returning to it in the shade of departing day. His sun and cloud scenery is exquisite. It reminds me of Fuseli's praise of Wilson—that having observed Nature in all her aspects, he had a separate and fitting touch for all; and that, in effects of dewy freshness, and warm morning and silent evening lights, few have equalled, and fewer excelled him.

JUNE 18TH.

ADAM SMITH draws an agreeable portrait of his friend Hume; but constant smoothness and ease of character are neither winning nor truthful—like Cowper's ice-palace, *it smiles, and it is cold.* In great men, the mingling light and dark of mirthfulness and melancholy compose a state of feeling far more delightful. "Is not that *naïveté* and good humour which his friends celebrate in him," Gray asked Beattie, "owing to this—that he has continued all his days an infant, but one who has unhappily been taught to read and write?" No zeal, no virtue, no hope; what a character! Warburton showed his resemblance to Bolingbroke. In fact, Hume took possession of the atheistical house which Pope's friend had erected; and, possessing more taste and caution, he fitted it up to receive genteel families of unbelief. He was a "decorator" of infidelity, and had a long run of patronage. Let us hope that he and his furniture are now going out of fashion.

JUNE 20TH.

READING the Heart of Mid-Lothian this morning, I noticed a remarkable coincidence of thought with a splendid sentiment in the Essay on Man:



Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

The passage of Scott occurs in the description of the storm which surprised Staunton and Butler, as they were crossing the Gare-loch. "There is something solemn in this delay of the storm," said Sir George: "it seems as if it suspended its peal, till it solemnized some important event in the world below." "Alas!" replied Butler, "what are we, that the laws of Nature should correspond in their march with our ephemeral deeds or sufferings? The clouds will burst when surcharged with the electric fluid, whether a *goat is falling at that instant from the cliffs of Arran, or a hero expiring on the field of battle he had won.*" The melody of the prose, with its dying fall, is most grand and affecting.

There is a little scene in the same story which always strikes me as exceedingly delicate and tender: I mean the meeting of the sisters in the Tolbooth:—"The unglazed window of the miserable chamber was open, and the beams of a bright sun fell upon the bed where the sufferers were seated. With a gentleness that had something of reverence in it, Ratcliffe partly closed the shutter, and seemed thus to throw a veil over a scene so mournful."

I remember an incident in the life of Swift, that is not unworthy of being mentioned in connexion with Scott. Lady Ashburnham, daughter of the Duke of Ormond, was one of the Dean's favourites, and he appears to have lamented her death with real grief. His account of a visit to her bereaved father is given in a letter to Mrs. Dingley (Jan. 4, 1712): "He bore up as well as he could; but something happening accidentally in discourse, the tears were just falling out of his eyes, and I looked off, to give him an opportunity (which he took) of wiping them with his handkerchief. I never saw anything so moving, nor such a mixture of greatness of mind, and tenderness, and discretion." What a leveller the heart is! The jailer of the Tolbooth closes the shutter, to shade

the anguish of the sisters; and the biographer of Gulliver turns aside, that a father may dry his tears for a daughter.

JUNE 22ND.

THIS pleasant edition of Our Village ought to find its way into every parlour-window, and wherever there is hay-carrying, or Maying, or nutting, or other rural occupation and amusement. But to feel the full charm of the book, the reader should live in the country it describes: "This pretty Berkshire of ours, renowned for its pastoral villages, its picturesque interchange of common and woodland, and small enclosures divided by lanes, to which thick borders of hedge-row timber give a character of deep and forest-like richness." And again: "This shady yet sunny Berkshire, where the scenery, without rising into grandeur, or breaking into wildness, is so peaceful, so cheerful, so varied, and so thoroughly English."

Gray considered the four most beautiful counties in England to be those of Worcester, Shropshire, Gloucester, and Hereford; to these he added Monmouthshire. One might have expected him to include Kent, of which he has given such charming sketches; especially of its river-views, the Medway and shipping, with the sea breaking on the eye, and mingling its white sails and blue waters with the deeper and brighter green of the woods and corn.

By way of contrast and shade, compare the counties of Warwick, Northampton, Huntingdon, Cambridge, and Bedford. With the exception of Cambridgeshire, which, in its own "quiet ugliness," is unapproachable, Northampton has the least interest for the poet, painter, or admirer of scenery. Arnold lamented his own nook in

it; no woods, only one copse, no heath, no down, no rock, no ruin, no clear stream, and scarcely any flowers. It seems an image of cultivated desolation. Yet, out of the wilderness the meditative fancy of Clare gathered flowers, gentleness, and beauty. Here are some lines quite fresh, from his Summer Morning, with the dew upon them :—

O'er pathless plains, at early hours,
The sleepy rustic sloomy goes;
The dews, brush'd off from grass and flowers,
Bemoistening sop his harden'd shoes.

Now let me tread the meadow paths,
While glittering dew the ground illumes,
As, sprinkled o'er the withering swaths,
Their moisture shrinks in sweet perfumes;

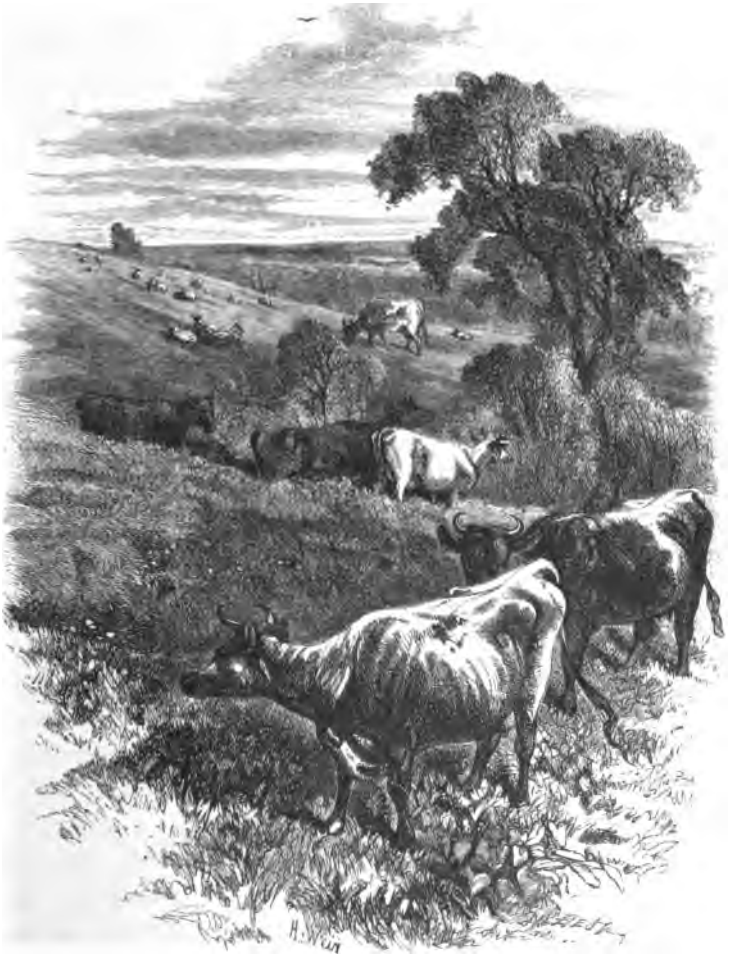
And hear the beetle sound his horn;
And hear the skylark whistling nigh,
Sprung from his bed of tufted corn,
A hailing minstrel in the sky.

Snug the wary watching thrush
Sits to prune her speckled breast,
Where the woodbine, round the bush
Weaving, hides her mortar'd nest,—

Till the cows, with hungry low,
Pick the rank grass from her bower;
Startled then—dead leaves below
Quick receive the pattering shower.

To certain minds, the absence of grandeur is a recommendation. Cowper, among the downs of Eartham, sighed for the grassy walks of Weston; and Constable, in the hills and solitudes of Westmoreland, felt a weight on his spirit. He looked around in vain for churches, farm-houses, or scattered hamlets, and considered flat, agricultural Suffolk to be a delightfuller country for the artist.

This feeling explains the remark, that a landscape-painter often finds the dullest spots the most suggestive. Little things



make up the sweetest pictures. A group of cattle standing in shade on a dark hill, with a gleam of sun falling on clouds in the

distance; a heathery roadside; an ivy-grown cottage at the end of a lane, running between hedges of brier-roses and honeysuckle;—these furnish subjects and food for the pencil. Give Ruysdael an old mill and two or three stunted trees, and see what he creates out of them. Commonest objects abound in the picturesque. The peacock yields to the wood-pigeon, and even the stag to the forest-donkey. Gainsborough kept one constantly at hand, that he might introduce it under every variety of posture and colour.

This naturalness—this dealing with every-day appearances—is the charm of Miss Mitford's writings. Mabuse painted Eden with a sculptured fountain in the centre. In Our Village, nothing is out of place or concord. Oranges and palm-trees do not grow in its fields, and blue humming-birds are never caught in the hedges. It is a series of true English scenes. Of course, in a certain sense, they are dressed. The weakness of Crabbe lay in his literalness. His sketches are plagiarisms of Nature. He described a tree, as Quintin Matsys painted a face. This picture of a fen would hardly have been attempted by any other artist in words:—

> Next appear'd a *dam*—so call'd the place
> Where lies a road confined in narrow space;
> A work of labour, for on either side
> Is level fen, a prospect wild and wide,
> With dikes on either side by ocean's self supplied:
> Far on the right the distant sea is seen,
> And salt the springs that feed the marsh between;
> Beneath the ancient bridge, the straiten'd flood
> Rolls through its sloping banks of slimy mud;
> Near it a sunken boat resists the tide,
> That frets and hurries to th' opposing side;
> The rushes sharp that on the borders grow,
> Bend their brown flow'rets to the stream below,
> Impure in all its course, in all its progress slow:
> Here a grave Flora scarcely deigns to bloom,
> Nor wears a rosy blush, nor sheds perfume;

The few dull flowers that o'er the place are spread
Partake the nature of their fenny bed;
Here, on its wiry stem, in rigid bloom,
Grows the salt lavender, that lacks perfume;
Here the dwarf sallows creep, the sept-foil harsh,
And the soft slimy mallow of the marsh;
Low on the ear the distant billows sound,
And just in view appears their gloomy bound;
No hedge, nor tree, conceals the glowing sun,
Birds, save a wat'ry tribe, the district shun,
Nor chirp among the reeds where bitter waters run.

Miss Mitford has done for her Berkshire hamlet what Cowper did for Weston. He called it the prettiest village in England, and made it to be so in his verse and prose. In his day it was pleasanter than in ours, because the little street of scattered houses was sheltered by trees. But the elements of beauty were few. A garden prospect of orchard bloom; a lime-avenue; one or two wood-paths breaking into grassy slopes—

Within the twilight of their distant shade;

these were the brightest features of the poet's village. Fancy and love imparted the grace.

An accomplished student of art has noticed this habit of rural describers, and commended it: "Nature is most defective in composition, and must be a little assisted." Claude illustrates the remark. He refined and decorated reality, but with such consummate faithfulness and harmony of truth and arrangement, that the picture appears to change with the tone and influence of the hour when it is contemplated. Price assures us that he sometimes looked at a landscape, in the coming on of twilight, until it glimmered and died away into distance, like a real scene in the fading colours of evening. This embellishment of woods and trees has been called the translation of landscape. We find it to have been largely practised by the old Masters, who seldom copied Nature except on commission. They

delighted, in the words of Sir George Beaumont, to exhibit what a country suggested, rather than what it comprised.

It would be easy, as pleasant, to transfer from Our Village some exquisite examples of this theory.

The Author goes into the lanes and commons of the neighbourhood, coming home to revive and arrange her pictures in the light of taste and memory, and then, in a sense not anticipated by Cowper—

> To lay the landscape on the snowy sheet.

Numberless passages crowd on the pen; but I would mention particularly her own territory—"the pride of my heart and the delight of my eyes, my garden;" the house "like a bird-cage, just fit to hang on a tree;" a broken hedge-row, with its mosaic of flowering weeds and mosses; the green hollow of little hills, with blossoming broom, which we call a dell; or the wood, beginning to show, on the reddening bush and spotted sycamore, the kindling colours of autumn. As to the figures—actors in the country drama—drop into Our Village wherever you please, you cannot lose your way. Look over the hedge at Jem and Mabel wheat-hoeing; talk to Mat. Shore, the blind gardener, about his tulips; hearken to little Walter singing to himself in the corn-field; or, above and before all, love and prize sweet, affectionate blind Jessy Lucas. Indeed, Miss Mitford paints a country-girl with the exquisite freshness and colour, which Bloomfield gives to her in verse:—

> No meadow-flower rose fresher to the view,
> That met her morning footsteps in the dew;
> When, if a nodding stranger eyed her charms,
> The blush of modesty was up in arms;
> Love's random glances struck th' unguarded mind,
> And beauty's magic made him look behind.

A beauty in these sketches ought to be carefully observed—their human interest. We are not enclosed in a wide landscape, without life, or work, or joy. It breathes and lives. The plough moves in the furrow, the sickle flashes among the corn, the



flail resounds at the barn-door; there is laughter under the hawthorn; and a merry group of children dances out from those clustering elm-trees. In this agreeable feature of her style, the Author reminds me of Waterloo. That charming painter was distinguished from his contemporary Ruysdael, and his scholar

Hobbema, by his peculiarity of treating rural scenes, in relation to their influence on man. His pictures speak to the heart, as well as to the eye. He employs very simple instruments for the purpose. Perhaps a narrow footpath winds across the fields and is lost in the gloom of thick trees; but a cottage window glimmers through the branches. The domestic interior of humble affection is opened to our eyes; the fire of sticks blazes upon the hearth; the housewife is busy at "her evening care," while

> His children run to lisp their sire's return,
> Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

This burying of life in the cool depth of nature, and making peacefulness and action to help and relieve one another, appears to me a happy secret of landscape painting. It is never skilfully introduced without success. Whoever has looked at the works of Wouverman, must have observed the outline of his buildings, whether it be cottage-roof, shed, or garden-wall, to be always broken by trees or some kind of verdure. The effect is most pleasant and refreshing.

I have suggested a comparison of Our Village with the pictures of Waterloo; and there is another Master who may afford a striking parallel in a different kind of excellence. I allude to Terburg, the most refined and eloquent of all *genre* painters. His distinguishing power is seen in his manner of leaving a story to be partly unravelled by the spectator himself. Waagen styles him the inventor of conversation-painting—the genteel comedy of art. I always enjoy this surprise in the people of Our Village.

A further resemblance between the works of the *genre* painters, and these sketches of country life, is afforded by their high finish. The old velvet chair of Gerard Dow, worn threadbare by use, is not more startling. It is scarcely to be expected that the merits of a school should be accompanied by none of its

defects. I have heard objections to the frequent repetition of similar characters, incidents, and scenery. But what reader of taste would wish them to be altered? The story of the connoisseur rises to the memory: "Now," said he to a visitor in his splendid gallery, "I will show you a real curiosity. There is a Wouverman without a horse in it." The omission was rare, but the picture was worthless. For my own part, I delight in the favourite faces, scenes, or furniture, of a painter, or author, reproduced under various combinations. The sameness is a pledge of authenticity. The jug and pipe are the autograph of Teniers.

I lay down my pen with one remark upon a quality of the highest interest and value in Miss Mitford's stories—the good humour, the happiness, and the contentment, of her men and women. Most of them live on the sunny side of the hamlet, and they who dwell in the shadow seem to be willing and waiting to cross over into the light. This joyous temperament is agreeably opposed to the dark and stern system of Crabbe. Each delineation is true, because it is a copy after the life. But Crabbe drew Nature in her degradation—Mitford, in her beauty. Hence is the different aspect which the village assumes under the pencil of the poet and the sketcher. It takes the colour of the mind and feeling. Perhaps a slight exaggeration may be observable in both; the one, elevating and irradiating whatever she finds of things honest and of good report in the annals of the poor; the other, depressing and blackening into grotesque deformity, and with a deeper shade, all that is harsh and repulsive in their sayings and doings. We have a like result in art. The banditti of Salvator Rosa become heroes; while the patriarchs of Rembrandt dwindle into beggars. The book and the picture will always hold some prejudice in solution; but each may be a gainer by its presence.

JUNE 29TH.

TOOK up Waller for a few minutes this afternoon. How fortunate he has been in critics and fame! "Nothing," is the trite saying of Dryden, "is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. Even after Chaucer there was a Spenser; a Fairfax before Waller and Denham were in being; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared." Denham commended his brave flights; Fenton thought his muse more beautiful than Juno in the girdle of Venus; Clarendon saw in him the apparition of a tenth muse; Prior joins him with Davenant in the achievement of reforming our verse; Pope loved his music; Addison praised his fancy and rhymes; Atterbury lifted him, as a master of language, above Spenser; Blackstone—he of the Commentaries—delighted in "Waller's ease" displayed on the lyre of Pope. Even Johnson welcomed him with warmth, unusual in his critical embraces. In this clamour of panegyric, Beattie had courage to hold up his hand. "Of Waller, it can only be said that he is not harsh." Descending into modern criticism, we find the spell retaining much of its early power. "Waller has, perhaps, received more than due praise for the refinement of his native language," is the conciliatory remark of Southey. The "correct Waller" is the somewhat colder salutation of Campbell. Hallam has a grave smile in his favour. After all, the reputation of Waller is hardly to be explained. Six or seven poems omitted, his composition is not conspicuous for harmony or elegance. To say with Atterbury, that the English tongue came into his hands like a rough diamond, to be polished into beauty, is like telling us that the rude portrait-painting of Titian was perfected by Kneller. Twenty years separated the

last production of Spenser and the first of Waller; and Atterbury triumphantly contrasts the modern grace and the sombre antiquity. The archaisms of Spenser had been already censured by Ben Jonson; and Pope complained that—

> Spenser himself affects the obsolete.

But the old words of the poet, like the foreign accent of a sweet voice, give a charm to the tone, without, in any large degree, obscuring the sense. The truth is, that every pause, turn, and variety of expression are to be found in the magnificent stanza of Spenser. He had sounded the depth of our versification, and caught, with a prophetic ear, the lyric flow and organ notes of Milton; the heroic swell of Dryden; and the tuneful antithesis of Pope. Open the Faëry Queen at any page—

> And ever-drizzling rain upon the loft.—B. I. c. i. st. 41.
>
> And fed with words that could not choose but please.—*Ibid.* 54.
>
> Had spread her purple robe through dewy aire.—C. ii. st. 7.
>
> A rosy girlond was the victor's meed.—*Ibid.* 37.
>
> Oh, how can beauty master the most strong,
> And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!—C. iii. st. 7.
>
> —— Fauns and satyrs far away,
> Within the wood were dancing in a round,
> While old Sylvanus slept in shady arbour sound.—B. I. c. vi. st. 7.

Could Waller mend these lines? and they are only drops from a fountain. Spenser made Waller, although Dryden chose to call him the poetical son of Fairfax. I know that Dryden had Waller's authority for claiming the relationship, since he had heard him own that he derived the harmony of his numbers from Godfrey of Bulloigne. But if Waller was really taught by Fairfax, he only painted from a shadow in the water, when the countenance itself was by his side. I am not undervaluing the soft numbers of the English Tasso, who was worthy of an age that produced

the Faëry Queen. His translation of the Jerusalem Delivered has some claim to be called an original poem, for more than half of the images in it are said to be his own. The last line of the following stanza is of the number—

> And forth she went, a ship for merchandize,
> Full of rich stuff, but none for sale exposed,
> A veil obscur'd the sunshine of her eyes,
> *The rose within herself her sweetness closed.*

But let Waller receive his due praise. To the old English cadence he imparted a French playfulness. His fancy was pleasing, and his poetic feelings were refined. His panegyric on the Protector contains some lines of exceeding merit, as in allusion to the quarrel of Cæsar, Antony, and Brutus—

> That sun once set, a thousand meaner stars
> *Gave a dim light to violence and wars.*

And the description of weary and sorrowful England laying her head on the bosom of Cromwell, is a grand design for a historical picture.

Perhaps his special gift was a certain neatness of phrase, as in the following lines:—

> Poets that lasting marble seek,
> Must carve in Latin, or in Greek;
> We write in sand, our language grows,
> And, like the tide, our work o'erflows.

And in the art of paying compliments he won, and deserved, the laurel.

JUNE 30TH.

SPENT ten minutes in watching—

> 'Mid the deep umbrage of a green hill's side,

the birth, growth, and death of a rainbow. Springing from the

fir-trees behind the church, it overarched the garden where our departed parishioners rest, and seemed to fix its pedestal of ruby and emerald on the opposite cornfield. The ploughman is just creeping from under the dripping hedge, and returns to his toil



through a gate of glory. A company of Angels might have shaken their wings over the leaves, sparkling with so many colours. And now the lighted column dissolves in rain of purple and

amethyst. The field, under the gilded rim of the distant horizon, is sown with precious stones, broken up into dust; for the dying rainbow has melted away on the ground. I never saw anything so wonderful—of Nature, and yet above her. Turner has not imagined on canvas a combination of tints more extravagant. All is freshness, transparency, and bloom. What a pleasant tumult is heard in the green hedge-rows and glittering grass!

> —— Nature, from the storm,
> Shines out afresh; and through the lightened air,
> A brighter lustre and a clearer calm,
> Diffusive, tremble—
> 'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
> Join'd to the low of kine, and numerous bleat
> Of flocks thick-nibbling through the clover'd vale.

A thought comes into my mind, as I shake the rain out of this lily, how calm and unpretending is the growth of everything beautiful in God's visible world! no noise! no pretension! You never hear the opening rose, nor the tulip shooting forth its gorgeous streaks. The soul grows in beauty, as its life resembles the flower's! Addison said that our time is most profitably employed in doings that make no figure in the world. He spoke from experience. Often must he have contrasted his solitary walks in the cloisters of Magdalen, with the sumptuous turmoil of Holland House; and the cheerful greeting of a college friend on the banks of the Cherwell, with the silken rustle of the imperious Warwick! And there is yet another reflection to be drawn from the vanished rainbow: it is the remembrance of that Bow of Faith which paints the rainy clouds of our life with glory:

> —— the soft gleam of Christian worth
> Which on some holy house we mark;
> Dear to the pastor's aching heart,
> To think, where'er he looks, such gleam may have a part.

JULY 1ST.

IT is impossible to read a page of literary history, without wonder at the capacity of recollection in famous men. The great Latin critic measured genius by memory. Remarkable stories are told of one of his own countrymen. Seneca, in his youth, repeated two thousand words in the order in which they had been uttered. In modern times, Mozart, with the help of a sketch in the crown of his hat, carried away the MISERERE of Allegri, which he heard in the Sistine chapel.

English theology furnishes several splendid examples of the faculty. Jewell was especially distinguished. On one occasion, the martyr Hooper wrote forty Irish words, which Jewell, after three or four perusals, repeated, according to their position, backwards and forwards. He performed a feat not less difficult with a passage from Erasmus. Saunderson knew by heart the Odes of Horace, the Offices of Cicero, and a considerable portion of Juvenal and Persius. Bates, the eloquent friend of Howe, rivalled the Greek philosopher mentioned by Pliny; and having delivered a public and unwritten address, went over it again with perfect ease and accuracy. Warburton was not inferior to his illustrious predecessors. His common-place-book was an old almanac, three inches square, in which he inserted occasional references, or hints of thoughts and sentences, to be woven into his compositions. But all the erudition of the Divine Legation was entrusted to memory. Pope's description of Bolingbroke is true of Warburton: "He sits like an intelligence, and recollects all the question within himself." Lord Clarendon declared that Hales, of Eton, carried about in his memory more learning than any scholar in the world.

Turning into a wider path, we find men of different ages and dispositions employing this endowment in poetical acquisitions. Gassendi had on his lips the poetry of Lucretius: M. Angelo, the greater part of Dante and Petrarch; and Galileo, of Ariosto, Petrarch, and Berni. Fontenelle mentions the ability of Leibnitz, even in old age, to repeat nearly all the poetry of Virgil, word for word; an amusing contrast to Malebranche, who never read ten verses without disgust. To these instances may be added that of Pope, who had not only a general, but local memory of much strength. He recollected the particular page of the book in which the fact or story was related. "If," wrote Atterbury, "you have not read the verses lately, I am sure you remember them, because you forget nothing." Wallis, the mathematician, without light, pen, ink, or paper, extracted the square root of twenty-seven places of figures, and kept the unwritten result in his memory during a month.

I will put down one case of memory ingeniously used, and another of the talent largely possessed, but without flexibility or advantage. The former refers to the renowned Hyder Ali. Unable to read or write, he had an ingenious contrivance for insuring the veracity of his correspondence. His secretary, having prepared the letter, read it aloud; it was then given to another person, who repeated it; and any discrepancy between the two was punished by the execution of the scribe. The next example refers to Walter Scott's friend, Dr. Leyden. A single perusal of an Act of Parliament, or any long document, prepared him to recite it; but the collective was unaccompanied by the analytical power. He remembered the whole, not the parts. To recover a passage or sentence, he was obliged to return to the beginning.

In literature and art, memory is a synonyme for invention; it is the life-blood of imagination, which faints and dies when the veins

are empty. The saying of Reynolds has the force of an axiom: "Genius may anticipate the season of maturity; but in the education of a people, as in that of an individual, memory must be exercised before the powers of reason and fancy can be expanded; nor may the artist hope to equal or surpass, till he has learned to imitate the works of his predecessors." Mozart studied the productions of every renowned composer with intense industry.

The memory must be educated in order to be useful. A straggling and open field of learning affords poor and insufficient pasturage; boundary lines are indispensable. As Shenstone said, our thoughts and observations should be *sorted*. This art of cultivation may be condensed into four rules—1. The habit of fixing the mind, like the eye, upon one object. 2. The application of the powers of reflection. 3. The watchfulness of understanding, which is known, in a good sense, as curiosity. 4. Method. After every effort and precaution, memory is that delicate hand of the intellect which seems to be most susceptible of violence or disease; its fine nerves quickly lose their energy, and cease to obey the impulse of the mind. The muscular sense of the member decays and vanishes.

Locke has illustrated the varying strength and duration of this faculty (Human Understanding, ch. x. sec. 5) by a metaphor, unsurpassed in our language for beauty of conception, aptness of application, and completeness of structure:—"Our minds represent to us those tombs to which we are approaching; where, though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away. How much the constitution of our bodies and the make of our animal spirits are concerned in this, and whether the temper of the brain makes this difference, that in some it retains the characters drawn on it like marble, in others like freestone, and in others little better than sand, I shall

not here inquire. Though it may seem probable, that the constitution of the body does sometimes influence the memory; since we sometimes find a disease quite strip the memory of all its ideas; and the flames of a fever, in a few days, calcine all those images into dust and confusion, which seemed to be as lasting as if engraved on marble." Pope's account of Wycherley elucidates Locke. Wycherley lost his memory, in consequence of a fever, when he was about forty years old. His habit was to read himself asleep with a favourite Author, and in the morning he would produce a copy of verses, formed upon the reading of the night, and retaining several of the thoughts, which he supposed to be entirely his own. Pope visited him almost every morning and evening through a whole winter; and he numbered these periodical returns of forgetfulness amongst the strangest phenomena of the mind.

The influence of sorrow or sickness upon the memory is a fruitful theme. Dr. Rush, an American physician, records a touching circumstance. He was called to visit a woman whom he had known in childhood, and found her rapidly sinking in typhus fever. Three words—"the Eagle's Nest"—at once soothed and brightened her mind. The tree had grown on her father's farm, and the name brought back the freshness and joy of her early days. From that hour she began to amend, and the fever left her:

> One clear idea, wakened in the breast
> By memory's magic, lets in all the rest.

Widely may the story be expanded and applied! If the dreary alleys of our great City could speak, they would tell us how the familiar haunts of youth and manhood return upon the wakeful heart; how fields, rivers, or villages, shine before the eyes; how the woodbine, flaunting up the cottage window, hangs its white clusters down the damp walls of the cellar. Chaucer

rejoiced in the daisy springing through the chinks of his dungeon; Shakspere watched the moonlight chequer the boards of the Globe theatre, just as it slept on the banks of the green lanes round Stratford; Goldsmith heard the nightingale in the pauses of Green



Arbour Court; Bloomfield saw the orchard bloom shaken by thrushes, startled in their song, over his dark garret; when the thump of the hammer on some impracticable sole recalled the flail in a Suffolk barn, descending "full on the destined ear;" Wordsworth beheld the lone Abbey of Tintern, and green farms along the pastoral Wye, in the tumult and fever of London

life. Beautiful memory of the eyes! If squalid courts, and smoky walls, and broken casements might find a tongue, and publish their confessions—what histories they would reveal of suffering, bleeding, illuminated genius:—of stricken hearts, fainting with the arrow, and retiring to die; yet by the enchantment of imagination, transforming hovels into palaces, and miserable lanes into verdant glades "mild opening to the golden day."

JULY 2ND.

READ the fourteenth sermon of Bishop Patrick, in the volume published after his death. I was aware that Richardson's Pamela had been recommended from the pulpit, but I did not know until this morning that the Essays of Cowley were publicly praised by the learned Bishop of Ely. He is speaking of princes whose power failed to afford them employment or happiness. "One of them (as a rare person of our nation hath expressed it better than I can do), who styled himself lord and god of all the earth, could not tell how to pass his day pleasantly, without spending two or three hours in catching flies, and killing them with a bodkin." The "rare person" is Cowley, to whom Patrick refers in the margin. The passage is in the Essay on Greatness, where we meet with an amusing allusion to contemporary manners:—"Is anything more common than to see our ladies of quality wear such high shoes, as they cannot walk in without one to lead them, and a gown as long again as their body, so that they cannot stir to the next room without a page or two to hold it up?"

The honour bestowed on Cowley and Richardson was afterwards shared by Gray. Home, the author of Douglas, sat with

a relation in the little church called Haddo's Hold, when the minister introduced a panegyric of the Elegy in a Country Churchyard, then recently published. But this tribute of applause was surpassed by another from a very different person. The anecdote was first related by Playfair, in the Life of Professor Robinson, who served as an engineer under General Wolfe. On the evening before the battle of Quebec, he accompanied the commander in his visits to some of the posts:—"As they rowed along, the General, with much feeling, repeated nearly the whole of Gray's Elegy to an officer who sat with him in the stern of the boat, adding, as he concluded—'that he would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow.'" Wolfe was a young man, and on the following day was to realize the truth of one of the grandest lines in the poem which he recited—

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

If Gray had known of this river-scene, he would have found something more serious to write to Dr. Wharton (Nov. 28, 1759) than the tale of a declamatory person "proposing a monument to Wolfe. In the course of it he wiped his eyes with one handkerchief, and Beckford (who seconded him) cried too, and wiped with two handkerchiefs at once, which was very moving."

JULY 3RD.

HAVE the readers of Paley observed the correspondence between the beginning of his famous chapter on Property, and a passage of Ben Jonson's comedy of the Fox, in that inimitable scene where Volpone, with the help of his servant Mosca, deceives the hypocritical inquirers after his health:—

BEN JONSON.

——And besides, sir,
We are not like the thresher that does stand
With a huge flail, watching a heap of corn,
And, hungry, dares not taste the smallest grain,
But feeds on mallows and such bitter herbs.

PALEY.

"If you should see a flock of pigeons in a field of corn, and if (instead of each picking where and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted, and no more,) you should see ninety and nine of them gathering all they got into a heap, reserving nothing for themselves but the chaff and refuse."

Doubtless this resemblance was accidental; but Paley was an admirable thief. Property, in his hands, bears compound interest. He plundered his brethren like a genius; a peculiarity which, according to Warburton, made Virgil an original author, and Blackmore an imitator:—"for they certainly were borrowers alike."

JULY 5TH.

WE have in Berks a few picturesque old houses scattered up and down, and they always contribute a most pleasing interest to a country walk. The villages round Cambridge abound in them. In Kent, the half-timbered houses are distinguished by the name of *wood-noggin*, because the pieces of timber used in the framing are called *wood-nogs*, nogging "being a species of brickwork carried up in panels between quarters." Sometimes flowers and patterns are worked in the plaster. At Newnham, near Feversham, is a house of this description, with a red ground and white flowers. The half-timber houses of Cheshire, familiarly known as "post and pan houses," are often very picture-like; and we have only to look at the works of the old masters, to recognise the value of these architectural embellishments. Ostade adapted and combined them with wonderful skill. His buildings of unequal height are thrown into different degrees of perspective; the sides, in the words of

Price, being "varied by projecting windows and iron; by sheds supported by brackets, with flowerpots on them; by the light, airy, and detached appearance of cages hung out from the wall; by porches and trellises of various construction, often covered with vine or ivy." We observe the same kind of effect in the



"chateau" of Rubens. The turrets gleam among the trees; thin smoke just vanishes into cloud; the sun glows on the windows. Add an antique balustrade, a footbridge with anglers leaning over it, a few peasants, a fowler, windmill sails faintly seen in the distance—slight circumstances—and what a composition they make!

Modern improvements are rapidly dismantling our old cities. The German traveller Kohl mentions Salisbury as the only town in England, where he saw a large number of houses with thatched roofs, and sprinkled with moss.

JULY 6TH.

How variable is taste! Kames censured Thomson for what he called his licentious use of personification, particularly with regard to abstract terms; and he specifies the following verses:—

> O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!
> On which the Power of cultivation lies,
> And joys to see the wonders of his toil.—SUMMER. 1423.

The book of Kames appeared in 1762. Three years afterwards Goldsmith collected his pleasing Essays, in which he quotes the same lines, and says, "We cannot conceive a more beautiful image than that of the Genius of Agriculture, distinguished by the implements of his Art, imbrowned with labour, glowing with health, crowned with a garland of foliage, flower and fruit, lying stretched at his ease on the brow of a gentle swelling hill, and contemplating with pleasure the happy effects of his own industry." Here the critic excels the poet. But Chatterton surpasses both in this picture:—

> When Autumn, bare and sunburnt, doth appear,
> With his gold hand gilding the falling leaf,
> Bringing up Winter to fulfil the year,
> Bearing upon his back the ripen'd sheaf.

JULY 7TH.

LOOKED over a little volume showing the obligations of literature to the mothers of England. Our greatest monarch opens the record. Asser relates, that Alfred was tempted into learning

to read by the splendour of a MS. which his mother promised him. There is a well-known story of Chatterton's faculties being awakened by the illumined capitals of some French music. But the early passion for books was never developed more strikingly than in Tasso and Shenstone, though with such unequal results.



Tasso, in his eighth year, began his studies with the rising sun, and was so impatient for the hour, that his mother often sent him to school with a lantern. Shenstone's mother quieted him for the night by wrapping up a piece of wood in the shape of a book, and putting it under his pillow. Burns caught the music of old ballads from his mother singing at her wheel.

No incident in the sad story of Bloomfield is so pleasing as the return to the home of his childhood, after a wearisome absence of twelve years. He took the Farmer's Boy in his hand, a present for his mother. He had not forgotten the eventful morning when she travelled with him to London, and left him with his elder brother in one of the dismallest courts of that great city, "with a charge, as he valued a mother's blessing, to watch over him, to set good examples for him, and never to forget that he had lost his father."

Bishop Jewell had his mother's name engraved on a signet-ring; and Lord Bacon poured his heart into one short sentence in his will:—"For my burial, I desire it may be in St. Michael's Church, near St. Alban's; there was my mother buried." At Dulwich, in a dark gown trimmed with fur, holding a book, we see the mother of Rubens, who, losing his father in childhood, was reared by her watchful tenderness. Pope wrote no lines more affecting than the four inscribed on the column to his mother in the garden at Twickenham. By Cowper's verses on his mother's picture we might place the letter of Gray: "It is long since I heard you were gone in haste to Yorkshire, on account of your mother's illness; and the same letter informed me that she was recovered, otherwise I had then wrote to you to beg you would take care of her, and to inform you that I had discovered a thing very little known, which is, that in one's whole life one can never have any more than a single mother." After his death, her clothes were found in the trunk as she left them, her son never having had courage to open it and distribute the legacies. Two celebrated persons not unknown to Gray, Warburton and Hurd, have touched the same chord of feeling: and in modern times its music has been heard in the homes of genius. In one of Wordsworth's sonnets—Catechising—is a pleasing allusion to the days of boyhood:—

How fluttered then thy anxious heart for me,
Beloved mother! Thou whose happy hand
Had bound the flowers I wore with faithful tie.
Sweet flowers! at whose inaudible command
Her countenance, phantom-like, doth reappear!
O, lost too early for this frequent tear,
And ill requited by this heart-felt sigh.

And one more famous than Wordsworth has given the same testimony: it is of Walter Scott that the writer speaks: "On lifting up his desk, we found arranged in careful order a series of little objects, so placed that his eye might rest on them every morning before he began his tasks. There were the old-fashioned boxes that had garnished his mother's toilet, when he, a sickly child, slept in her dressing-room; the silver taper-stand which the young advocate had bought for her with his first five-guinea fee; a row of small packets inscribed with her hand, and containing the hair of those of her offspring who had died before her, and more things of the like sort, recalling 'The old familiar faces.'" I will write here, by way of scholiast, the beautiful verses of that poet whom, of contemporaries, Scott most admired—Crabbe:

Arrived at home, how then he gazed around
On every place where she no more was found;
The seat at table she was wont to fill,
The fire-side chair still set, but vacant still;
The Sunday pew she filled with all her race;
Each place of hers was now a sacred place!

Nor has literature monopoly in this affection of the heart. The deck and the battle-field tell the same story. The circumstance in Sir John Moore's history, that falls upon the ear with the strongest pathos, is the message which he faltered out to his mother, while falling from his horse at Corunna.

JULY 9TH.

READ Mr. Keble's Prælections, ix. x. There may be truth, as there certainly is beauty, in his suggestion, that in all the varieties of literary composition, order and harmony can be traced. First come the glow, the animation, and the pride of the national heart, in the magnificent legends of ancestral renown; this is the poetry of the Epos. Then wind along the diversified scenes of life, in its dignity of dominion, splendour of exploit, and solemnity of grief; this is the many-coloured episode of the Drama. Lastly appear the sweeter pictures of retirement and peace. The traveller, tired of wandering, sighs for home; the glitter of the pageant melts, and the soul reveals its immortality by longings after simpler and more enduring pleasures. The ocean of mystery rolls onward beneath the down-stooping and burning eye. Then Nature, neglected and despised, uncovers her bosom to her child hanging over the precipice, and wins him back to her arms with the endearing tenderness of the mother; and this is the poetry of rural Description.

Those reflections of heaven which we call the charms of nature, may be intended by the merciful Architect to breathe a sacred tranquillity and resignation over His weary people. And if it be objected that holy men of old, whose lives were kindled with fire from the altar, did not so regard or employ the scenes around them, I think that Mr. Keble has supplied an explanation. They possessed what the Greek and Latin poets wanted—a sure and certain hope of lasting blessedness and repose. They needed not the sheltering embrace of woods, and the still valleys of pastoral solitude, to cheer and soothe their disquieted souls. They did not

look to the autumn sun, to gild their dark path and journey, because a purer light was always present, shedding over their thoughts and footsteps a glory that neither sickness, nor poverty, nor danger, nor death itself could extinguish. The objects of love, scatttered over the earth, were observed. They used them to magnify the splendour and the attributes of the Creator; not to mitigate the sufferings nor disperse the griefs of the creature. They longed for the wings of the dove, not that they might flee away to the mountain-top, or the gloom of the cedar; but yearned for the fairer country, whither they knew themselves to be travelling. So they made this world, with all its delights, a ladder to the next, and life an Olivet, where the light might descend upon the adoring soul. The early Christians had no descriptive poetry; they found other organs of utterance—the Hebrew prophecies, prayers, songs of devotion, the Sacraments; these were veins carrying along the fervid blood of the spiritual frame. Christian truth was Christian poetry.

The origin of rural song has occasioned less controversy than the rank to be assigned to it. The merry-making or quarrelling of boors in Teniers, and the familiar life of Brouwer or Ostade, are excellent in their kind; but Reynolds estimates its value by the rare or frequent introduction of the passions, as they appear in general and more enlarged nature. This rule he applies to the battle-pieces of Bourgognone, the gallantries of Watteau, the landscapes of Claude, and the sea-views of Vandervelde. In all of which he discovers the same claim, in different degrees, to the title and dignity of a painter, as a satirist, sonneteer, epigrammatist, or describer, might assert to that of a poet. But this criticism, however just of colour and design, bears very weakly on compositions of the pen.

JULY 11TH.

THERE is a saying of Pascal, that trees, not fruitful in their native earth, often yield abundantly if transplanted. I have just fallen upon an illustration in Chalmers' discourse on the "Expulsive Power of a new Affection." His argument is after this manner. Practical morality has two methods of displacing the love of the world in the heart: one, by showing the vanity of it, and making its rejection flow out of a sense of unworthiness in the thing desired; another, by exhibiting a fresh object, and substituting a new appetite and affection for the old. He proves that the constitution of our nature does not, instinctively or voluntarily, cast out a passion for its native baseness. One must be expelled by another: the evil by the good. The heart cannot be empty. The moral, like the physical system, abhors a vacuum. The youth of folly has its old age of cards. The tumult of the ball subsides into a shuffle. There must ever be the ascendancy of a new passion. The strong man is not to be destroyed, but dispossessed. You may fill the throne, not overthrow it. Whatever be the succession of mental revolutions, a despotism will prevail. Subdue the old desire by the expulsive power of the new. Such is the course of Chalmers' exposition, which, being continually swelled by tributary streams, pursues its course through a diversified track of argument, metaphor, and exhortation.

Is it his own? Let us endeavour to follow the stream to the spring. If we turn to the second Epistle of Pope, we find him acknowledging the insufficiency of reason, which only removes the "weaker passions for the strong," at the same time that he proclaims its power to shape, modify, and dispose:—

See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;
See avarice, prudence—sloth, philosophy.

We hear in this brief aphorism a faint sound of Chalmers; there is something here of the expulsive power of a new affection. But the stream does not lose itself at Twickenham; it winds far away among the hills, into those sequestered haunts of philosophy whither Pope was probably led by Bolingbroke. In the high and sunny region of Bacon's learning the fountain rises: "It is of especial use in morality, to set affection against affection, and endeavour to master one passion by another, as we hunt beast with beast." But Bacon had read Epictetus—"What destroys habit? A contrary habit." However, the Scotchman needed not to have questioned the English, or the Greek. The Latin Fathers have the thought. Hear Augustine—"The love of earthly things is only expelled by a certain sweet experience of things eternal." And hear Jerome—"One love extinguishes another."

The secret of intellectual excellence lies in diligent travelling back to the old fountains. Locke says, that the water running from the spring is the property of every man; but that the pitcher belongs to him who fills it. He who goes to the original author—the well-head—draws from a public reservoir. The student should despise the pitcher as much as he can. In theology, above all branches of literature, new streams, that sparkle to the eye and refresh the thirst, commonly flow from the ancient springs; one short caution may be given and recollected: Keep out of your own century. Why read the modern treatise or sermon, when you have Hooker and Donne? This is deposing the monarch, to set up the chamberlain.

Having shown Chalmers as the copier, I will now exhibit him as the copied. His lectures on the Christian Revelation, viewed in connexion with modern astronomy, contain many splendid, and

some sublime images and illustrations; one of the most striking has been happily imitated by Mrs. Hemans, in an early poem called "The Sceptic."

CHALMERS.

The leaf quivers on the branch that supports it, and lies at the mercy of the slightest accident. A breath of wind tears it from its stem. In a moment of time, the life, which we know by the microscope it teems with, is extinguished, and an occurrence so insignificant in the eye of man, and in the scale of his observation, carries in it, to the myriads that people this little leaf, an event as terrible and as decisive as the destruction of the world.

HEMANS.

As the light leaf, whose fall to ruin bears
Some trembling insect's little world of cares,
Descends in silence, while around waves on
The mighty forest, reckless what is gone:
Such is man's doom, and ere the autumn's flown—
Start not, thou trifler! such may be thine own.

JULY 12TH.

OUR wood is gay this evening with a rustic tea-party:

And far and wide over the vicar's pale.
Black hoods and scarlet crossing hill and dale,
All, all abroad, and music in the gale.

In a former page of this journal I proposed a history of gardens; and the writer, when he is found, may add a supplementary chapter on those out-of-door entertainments, which are so pleasantly associated with trees, flowers, turf, beauty, and singing. Pliny and Cowper may be the representatives of the ancient and modern fashions. The Italian author rejoiced in every element of rural decoration. His villa was sheltered by the Apennines; a green plain stretched before it, and fruitful vineyards waved below. Taste embellished what nature supplied. In the grounds was a basin of exquisitely polished marble, always full of crystal water, but never overflowing. "When I sup here,"

Pliny wrote to a friend, "this basin serves me for a table, the larger sort of dishes being placed round the margin, while the smaller swim about in the form of little vessels and water-fowl."



Some vestige of this liquid furniture may still be recognised. When Captain Basil Hall visited the baths of Leuk, he found the bathers immersed nearly up to the throat, with tables floating

before them, on which the ladies put their work, the gentlemen their books or newspapers, and the children their toys.

Louis XV. invented a sinking sideboard at Choisi. It rose, presented its treasure, and disappeared,—

> Lo! here attendant on the shadowy hour,
> The closet supper served by hands unseen.

But French and Latin luxury dwindles away before the magnificent festivals of that Castle, which Thomson built in his golden verse; where no bell rings, no knocker resounds; but bright doors open of their own accord into halls, heaped with the softness and splendour of Turkey and Persia:—

> Soft quilts on quilts, on carpets carpets spread,
> And couches stretched around in seemly band;
> And endless pillows rise to prop the head;
> So that each spacious room was one full-swelling bed.
>
> And everywhere huge cover'd tables stood,
> With wines high-flavour'd, and rich viands crown'd;
> Whatever sprightly juice or tasteful food
> On the green bosom of this earth are found,
> And all old ocean 'genders in his round,
> Some hand unseen these silently display'd,
> Even undemanded by a sign or sound;
> You need but wish, and, instantly obey'd,
> Fair rang'd the dishes rose, and thick the glasses play'd.

So much for the picturesque of Pic-Nics. And yet pleasanter is the story of Oberon's entertainment at Fairy Court. Herrick relates it:—

> A little mushroom table spread;
> After short prayers, they set on bread,
> A moon-parch'd grain of purest wheat,
> With some small glittering grit, to eat
> His choicest bits with; then in a trice
> They make a feast less great than nice.
> But all this while his eye is served,
> We must not think his ear was starved;

But there was in place, to stir
His spleen, the chirping grasshopper,
The merry cricket, puling fly,
The piping gnat for minstrelsy:
And now we must imagine first
The elves present, to quench his thirst,
A pure seedpearl of infant dew;
Brought and besweeten'd in a blue
And pregnant violet; which done,
His kitling eyes begin to run
Quite through the table, where he spies
The horns of papery butterflies,
Of which he eats;
A little furze-ball pudding stands
By, yet not blessed by his hands,
That was too coarse; but then forthwith
He ventures boldly on the pith
Of sugar'd rush, and eats the sag,
And well bestrutted bee's sweet bag;
The broke heart of a nightingale
O'ercome in music; with a wine
Ne'er ravish'd from the flattering vine,
But gently press'd from the soft side
Of the most sweet and dainty bride,
Brought in a dainty daisy, which
He fully quaffs up to bewitch
His blood to height.

Let us turn to the simpler entertainment of country life:—

A holy-day—the frugal banquet spread
On the fresh herbage near the fountain head,
With quips and cranks—what time the wood-lark there
Scatters her loose notes on the sultry air.

The Roman villa fades into the blue Apennines, and green hedges and chestnut-trees of an English village grow up. Instead of Pliny we have Cowper:—"Yesterday se'nnight we all dined together in the Spinnie, a most delightful retirement belonging to Mr. Throckmorton, of Weston. Lady Austin's lackey, and a lad that waits on me in the garden, drove a wheelbarrow full of eatables and drinkables to the scene of our fête champêtre. A board

laid over the top of the wheelbarrow served us for a table. Our dining-room was a root-house, lined with moss and ivy. At six o'clock the servants, who had dined under the great elm, upon the ground, at a little distance, boiled the kettle, and the said wheelbarrow served us for a table."

JULY 13TH.

IN the cumbersome edition of the works of Parr, among many dull letters of dull people, is one of interest from Bennet, Bishop of Cloyne, describing the episcopal residence, where Berkeley, the accomplished friend of Pope, formerly dwelt. A few traces of him are preserved. The garden abounded in strawberries, of which Berkeley was very fond. But its most singular feature was a winding walk, nearly a quarter of a mile in length, enclosed for a considerable part of the distance by a myrtle hedge, six feet high, planted by Berkeley himself, each plant having a large ball of tar at the root.

The tar-epidemic spread far and wide. Gray tells Dr. Wharton:—"Mr. Trollope and I are in a course of tar-water; he for his present, I for my future distempers. If you think it will kill me, send away a man and horse directly, for I drink like a fish." But the myrtle hedge of Cloyne was, doubtless, the earliest instance of this medical treatment applied to trees.

Of Berkeley little is remembered. Bennet told Parr that "he made no improvement to the house; yet the part of it he inhabited wanted it much; for it is now only good enough for the upper servants. My study is the room where he kept his apparatus for tar-water." Indeed, the gifted enthusiast was too busy and happy to be anxious about refinements of accommodation. With a wife

who painted gracefully, sang like a nightingale, and appreciated her husband; with children who resembled their parents in all the



accomplishments of taste and the graces of religion, and with a temper himself of singular sweetness and amiability,—what could

he sigh for? The dismallest room in Cloyne must have been full of sunlight. Never was seen a domestic interior of tenderer beauty and affection; and in the bishop's letters we catch an occasional glimpse of it—"The more we have of good instruments the better; for all my children, not excepting my little daughter, learn to play, and are preparing to fill my house with harmony against all events, that if we have worse times we may have better spirits." Berkeley was the Christian gentleman of his age—the Philip Sidney of Theology. The same fine poetical colour enriched the complexions of both; and the apostle of the Bermudas, like the hero of Zutphen, would have ploughed up life and re-sown it for Arcadia.

JULY 14TH.

EVERY one has heard of Gray's wish to lie undisturbed on a sofa, and read new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon. I was surprised to find an Archbishop of York expressing a similar partiality. Dr. Herring writes to W. Duncombe, November 3, 1738: "I cannot help mentioning a French book to you, which I brought in the coach with me—Le Paysan Parvenu. It is a book of gallantry, but very modest; the things which entertained me were the justice of some of the characters in it, and the great penetration into human nature." Mr. Green, of Ipswich, speaks of the same novel with more caution and judgment. He admires the scene painting, but censures the moral that animates it. Herring, and Stone, Primate of Ireland, were the only persons of rank or consideration who praised Hume's History of England on its first appearance, as the writer tells us with pardonable complacency.

But Marivaux has won golden opinions in later times. When a living scholar entered the library of Mr. Wyndham, soon after the death of that accomplished person, he saw upon his table the Marianne of Marivaux. There is another story-teller in Latin, and not much better known, who delighted the most unhappy of our poets. Cowper found his Marivaux in Barclay, whose romance of Argenis he thought the best that ever was written; in the highest degree interesting, rich in incident, full of surprises, with a narrative free from intricacy, and a style not unworthy of Tacitus. Barclay was the son of a Scottish lawyer; he went to Rome in the beginning of the 17th century, and was buried near Tasso—and, I believe, under the same oak.

JULY 15TH.

MOST people know the soothing influence of a walk—

> Beneath th' umbrageous multitude of leaves,

where

> The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard.

It was the only rural sensation which Johnson acknowledged. But there is another woodland pleasure to which he would have been insensible; that of stooping in calm reverie over a running brook, and watching the reflection of the trees in the water. I have spent the sunny fragments of a sweet afternoon in this visionary enjoyment, not without endeavouring to moralize what I saw. These leaves on the stream seemed to be images of slight circumstances in life—little things that influence our hopes, successes, consolations, and pains.

We are not only pleased, but turned by a feather. The history of a man is a calendar of straws. If the nose of Cleopatra had

been shorter, said Pascal in his brilliant way, Antony might have kept the world. The Mohammedans have a tradition, that, when



their Prophet concealed himself in Mount Shur, his pursuers were baffled by a spider's web over the mouth of the cave.

The shadows of leaves in water, then, are to me so many lessons of life. I call to mind Demosthenes rushing from the Athenian Assembly, burning with shame, and in the moment of degradation encountered by Satyrus. It was the apparition of his good spirit, and changed his fortune. The hisses of his countrymen melted into distance. He learns the art of Elocution: and, when he next ascended the *bema*, his lip was roughened by no grit of the pebble. Again: Socrates meeting Xenophon in a narrow gateway, stopped him by extending his stick across the path, and inquired, "How a man might attain to virtue and honour?" Xenophon could not answer; and the philosopher, bidding him follow, became thenceforward his master in Ethics. These incidents were shadows of leaves on the stream; but they conducted Demosthenes into the temple of eloquence, and placed Xenophon by the side of Livy.

We have pleasing examples nearer home. Evelyn, sauntering along a meadow near Says Court, loitered to look in at the window of a lonely thatched house, where a young man was carving a cartoon of Tintoret. He requested permission to enter, and soon recommended the artist to Charles II. From that day, the name of Gibbins belonged to his country. Gibbon, among the ruins of Roman grandeur, conceives his prose epic; Thorwaldsen sees a boy sitting on the steps of a house, and goes home to model Mercury; Opie bends over the shoulder of a companion drawing a butterfly, and rises up a painter; Giotto sketches a sheep on a stone, which attracts the notice of Cimabue, passing by that way; and the rude shepherd boy is immortalized by Dante. Milton retires to Chalfont; and that refuge from the plague gives to us Paradise Regained. Lady Austen points to a sofa; and Cowper creates the Task. A dispute about a music-desk awakens the humour of the Lutrin; and an apothecary's quarrel

produces the Dispensary. The accidental playing of a Welsh harper at Cambridge, inspired Gray with the conclusion of the 'Bard,' which had been lying—a noble fragment—for a long time in his desk.

Slight circumstances are the texts of science. Pascal heard a common dinner-plate ring, and wrote a tract upon sound. While Galileo studied medicine in the University of Pisa, the regular oscillation of a lamp, suspended from the roof of the cathedral, attracted his observation, and led him to consider the vibrations of pendulums. Kepler determined to fill his cellars from the Austrian vineyards; but, disputing the accuracy of the seller's measurement, he worked out one of the "earliest specimens of what is now called the modern analysis." Cuvier dissects a cuttle-fish; and the history of the whole animal kingdom unfolds itself before him. A sheet of paper, sent from the press with the letters accidentally raised, suggests the embossed alphabet for the blind; and a physician, lying awake and listening to the beating of his heart, contributes the most learned book upon the diseases of that organ.

Thus, in life and science, the strange intricacies and unions of things small and splendid are clearly discerned. Causes and effects wind into each other. "By this most astonishing connexion—these reciprocal correspondences and mutual relations—everything which we see in the course of nature is actually brought about; and things, seemingly the most insignificant imaginable, are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance." History is a commentary on this wisdom of Butler. A proclamation furls the sails of a ship; and Cromwell, instead of plying his axe in a forest-clearing of America, blasphemes God, and beheads his sovereign at home. Bruce raises his eyes to the ceiling, where a spider was struggling to fix a line

for his web; and instead of a crusader, we have the hero of Bannockburn.

No fountain of beauty is unshadowed by leaves. Slight circumstances in books, pictures, or statues, often make the strongest impression upon the memory. I recollect an instance in the Faëry Queen:—Una, wandering in search of the Red-Cross Knight, after traversing uninhabited wildernesses, discovers a pathway of beaten grass—

> In which the track of people's footing was.

Again, in the Italy of Mr. Rogers:—Twilight began to close round the poet after a day at Pompeii; and as he stood by the house of Pansa,

> —— a ray,
> Bright and yet brighter, on the pavement glanc'd,
> *And on the wheel-track worn for centuries,*
> And on the stepping-stone from side to side,
> O'er which the maidens with their water-urns
> Were wont to trip so lightly; full and clear
> The moon was rising, and at once revealed
> The name of every dweller and his craft.

The grass, worn by footsteps, gives life and beauty to the desert; and the old wheel-track, seen in the moonlight, carries us into the city of the dead, as it exulted in the morning of its strength. In the picture, as in the poem, slight circumstances allure and fascinate the eye. A book drawn by Bassano deceived one of the Carracci, who stretched out his hand to take it. In a Correggio at Florence, the Virgin is on her knees, desiring, yet fearing to rise, the Divine Infant having fallen asleep on the corner of her mantle, which had dropped to the ground. A landscape of Ruysdael frequently seems to be gathered into one ivy-grown pollard, that moulders away through the canvas. Pepys mentions a

flowerpot, by Simon Varelst, from which the dew-drops appeared to hang, so that he put his finger to them again and again, before he could be assured of the delusion of his eyes. The book that bewildered the artist, the child slumbering on the edge of the mantle, the broken trunk of the oak, and the sparkling drops on the flower, are so many shadows of leaves—slight circumstances that charm the taste of the beholder.

Little things in art and literature displease, as much as they delight us. In the splendid description of the death of Laocoon, P. Knight thinks that Virgil misunderstood and debased the Greek sculptor's conception, by making the hero cry out under the grasp of the serpent. In the marble, the breast of Laocoon is expanded, and the throat is contracted, to show that the agonies which convulsed his frame were borne in silence. The chisel of Bernini committed the error of Virgil's pen. He gave a mean expression to his statue of David, by showing him in the act of biting his under lip when he hurled the stone from the sling. Nor should we underrate such occasions of critical offence: whatever breaks the unity of interest in a book, a statue, or a picture, must detract something by mutilation. In the great Vandyck, at Wilton, the escutcheon of the Pembroke family stares out from the corner. Cuyp, in a different way, weakened some of his finest landscapes by the unsoftened crimson of the central figure; whereas Titian, more exquisitely skilful, melted his warm colours into the colder parts of the composition. With a red scarf, or a little blue drapery, he subdued every feature, attitude, and costume, into harmony and grace.

Slight circumstances have a moral interest, as deep as it is varied. Retracing the current of old age to its early springs in childhood and youth, the memory still lingers on the shadows of the leaves. Warren Hastings, encircled by Indian splendour, and

seeming to be absorbed in the cares of government, had always before his eyes a little wood at Daylesford, in Worcestershire, where he was born. It is not difficult to believe that Pope felt less pride in the subscription to his Homer, than in the one treasured shilling that Dryden gave to him, when a boy, for a translation from Ovid.

This woodland brook suggests another thought. A breath of wind rustles the pendulous boughs, and disperses all the reflections of leaves. Ruffle the surface, and the image flies. It is a subject of hourly experience, that the bond of years is snapped in a moment. Baretti was always welcomed and praised by Johnson, as the oldest friend he had in the world. The sharp edge of a witty tongue cut down this growth of time in ten minutes. Baretti, calling on the moralist, was rallied on the superior skill of Omai the Otaheitan, who had conquered him at chess. In a storm of indignation snatching up his hat and stick, he rushed from the room, and never visited his friend any more. The stream grew calm, but the bough was broken.

It might be profitable to inquire into the retarding or stimulating influence of insignificant sayings, praise, or blame, upon men in pursuit of knowledge and reputation. The reproof of a Wesleyan minister, scrawled on a window, caused Adam Clarke to abandon his classical studies. During four years he never opened a book of learning; and even his Greek Testament was closed. Burke, rising to address the House with a roll of paper in his hand, was interrupted by a member, who deprecated the infliction of the MS. on his hearers. The orator, in shame and disgust, quitted his seat. Here are two leaves in the water. The scholar lost a precious season of improvement through the malice of a bigot; and the statesman, who had been deaf to a lion, was disconcerted by a bray.

A pleasant page might be composed from the odd circumstances —slight but provoking—which have happened to famous people. See Tasso, stopped by the Roman Custom-house, and leaving his portmanteau in charge for five ducats.

A beam of the setting sun has just darted into the middle of the stream. The shadow of the leaf brightens upon the burnished water. I draw comfort from the appearance. Only a little ray has fallen on the brook, but it alters its colour. Experience points to the same illumination of the stream of life. Slight circumstances are its sunbeams. The seven Bishops, martyrs for conscience' sake, were committed to the Tower on a Friday. They reached the prison in the evening, just as Divine service was beginning; and immediately hastening to the chapel, were cheered by the words of St. Paul in the second lesson: "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments." What blessings were breathed in every syllable!

Or take a different example. When the packet-ship, Lady Hobart, was driving before the hurricane, a white bird suddenly descended on the mast. The hearts of the crew were lightened; hope dawned. Such consolation may be always mine. One bright, holy, faithful thought is my dove upon the mast. It tells me of a clearing storm, and a coming calm, and appearing flowers, and the time of the singing of birds.

Men wear out their days and strength in seeking happiness, but they have only to stoop and gather it, or look inward and find it. I am struck by the Spanish discovery of the mines of Potosi. An Indian, pursuing deer, to save himself from slipping over a rock, seized a bush with his hand; the violence of the wrench loosened the earth round the root, and a small piece of silver attracted his eye. He carried it home and returned for more. A torn-up shrub

discloses a silver mine. In the waste places of our mortality, there is not a common flower which has not some precious ore at its root. We catch at the broken reed, and the treasure appears.



An Indian superstition illustrates very sweetly the wide-spreading fruitfulness of blessing and contentment. A plant grows in the jungle which emits a clear flame in the night. "To wanderers in the Himalaya mountains it serves for a lamp, burning

without oil." In a spiritual sense, this luminous grass sheds green over our English villages, and skirts the flinty highways of swarming cities, if only it be sought with loving and trustful eyes Everywhere the seed of hope and joy has been scattered by the Great Husbandman. Its blade shines in the darkest weather. Alas! that men should trample it under foot!—despising the lustre and guidance of little mercies, in their impatient pride to reach a broader and more magnificent thoroughfare!

Perhaps the familiar but touching anecdote of Mungo Park may give emphasis to the allegory. Stripped and plundered of his clothes in Africa, he sat down in despair. The nearest European settlement was five hundred miles off. What could he do? In the agony of his grief and desolation, he happened to look upon a little moss in flower. It was not larger than the top of one of his fingers —"Can that Being," he thought, "who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image?" The meditation restored his courage; he went on his way comforted and rejoicing, and soon arrived at a small village. The moss in flower was the shadow of a leaf upon the stream.

And sometimes a slight circumstance has been, in a very melancholy sense, the shadow thrown before the catastrophe. The reader may recollect the anecdote of Chatterton, which Dix tells:— Three days before his death, when walking with a friend in St. Pancras churchyard, reading the epitaphs, and not perceiving a grave which was just dug, he fell into it. His friend coming to his aid, and helping him out, said playfully, that he was happy to see the rising of genius. Chatterton smiled, and taking the arm of his companion, replied: "I feel the sting of a speedy dissolution; I have been at war with the grave for some time, and find it not so

easy to vanquish as I imagined. We can find an asylum from every creditor but that."

I learn yet another lesson from these branches, which already begin to grow dim in the mirror. The road to home-happiness lies over small stepping-stones. Slight circumstances are the stumbling-blocks of families. The prick of a pin, says a proverb collected by Fuller, is enough to make an empire insipid. The tenderer the heart is, the painfuller is the wound. An unkind word withers the blossom of love, as the most delicate rings of the vine are troubled by the faintest breeze. The misery of a life is born of a chance observation. If the true history of quarrels, public and private, were honestly written, it would be silenced by an uproar of derision. The retainers of a Norman monastery fought and hated one another, during a hundred and forty years, for the right of hunting rabbits.

There is a Tree, of which every leaf casts a healing shade; I shall not have lost this balmy summer evening, if the mossy bridge, and the gilded brook, and the rustling boughs remind me of it. Slight circumstances compose the life of the Christian, whose blessings, like his wishes, are on the ground, and call him to stoop and gather them. Only let me remember that all things work together for good to the true pilgrim. Even in dark times the beauty of Hope was felt. The antique finger drew her in the attitude of motion; her garments drawn aside. She was always hastening forward! Sweet traveller and guide to heaven! take the lily of Eden in thy hand, and lead me whithersoever thou goest!

JULY 16TH.

DRYDEN may be backed with Pope against any un-rhyming author in the language. His prose would make a reputation, with the poetry left out. After all, the admiration of Fox is not so unaccountable. What flexibility! what vigour! what harmony! what fulness! His language is an organ, with nearly all the stops. I have been reading, for the twentieth time, his parallel between poetry and painting. In reference to the scene in the Æneid, where the storm drives Æneas and Dido into the cavern, Dryden makes this remark:—"I suppose that a painter would not be much commended who should pick out this cavern from the whole Æneis, when he had better leave them in their obscurity, than let in a flash of lightning to clear the natural darkness of the place, by which he must discover himself as much as them."

An illustrious contemporary of Dryden—even Poussin—has selected this episode, and managed it with admirable taste. The composition of the picture is full of grandeur; although the dark ground has communicated an excessive blackness to the colouring. But the effect is surprising. The sudden gloom is relieved by light in the distant horizon, from which the tempest rushes before the wind. A white horse, a purple cloth upon it, is held by a Cupid with coloured wings, while the sun streams down from the clearing sky. Unfortunately, the horse is coarse and Flemish. Virgil mentions two horses—Dido's and that on which the young Ascanius exults along the valley. Poussin gives only the horse of the Carthaginian queen, and leaves out the ornaments:

> — Ostroque insignis et auro
> Stat sonipes—

The 'fulsere ignes,' he translates very prettily into fluttering Loves.

JULY 17TH.

REMINDED this evening of that beautiful expression of Milton, about pluming the wings of thought, after being ruffled in the crowd. The mind revives in solitude. Fresh airs blow down upon it from the green hills and gardens of fancy. It gets its health and colour again. But I would not quite recommend the advice of Cowley, for he considered that man the happiest, who had not only quitted the metropolis, but abstained from visiting the next market-town of his county. We owe a debt to our brethren; and, however fierce the lions may be in the wilderness, we are not to surround ourselves with a wall of fire, and go to sleep in the centre. Let me be just to this most delightful writer. He knew how few people are fit for the solitariness which he loved. In his essay on Solitude he says:—"They must have enough knowledge of the world to see the vanity of it, and enough virtue to despise all vanity; if the mind be possessed with any lust or passions, a man had better be in a fair, than in a wood alone. They may, like petty thieves, cheat us, perhaps, and pick our pockets in the midst of company; but, like robbers, they use to strip, and bind, or murder us, when they catch us alone. This is but to retreat from men, and fall into the hands of devils."

But some sequesterment is needful for our intellectual, as for our spiritual nature. A bird is shut up and darkened before it learns a tune; trees and sun draw off its attention. The music of fancy is taught in a similar manner. The loneliness, however, must be fed; and the kind of nourishment is soon discovered. The purple feather of the bird tells us of the seed. So it is in literature. The violets of Colonos peep out under the hedges of Milton's Eden.

JULY 18TH.

MOST poetical readers know by heart Mr. Wordsworth's charming portraiture of womanly sweetness, which is able to cheer and bless us in all weathers of life. He has written nothing tenderer or truer—

> I saw her, upon nearer view,
> A spirit, yet a woman too.
> Her household motions light and free,
> And steps of virgin liberty;
> A countenance in which did meet
> Sweet records, promises as sweet.
> A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food,
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

The thought has been often uttered; as by our excellent friend Goldsmith, introducing Dr. Primrose: "I had scarcely taken orders a year, before I began to think seriously of matrimony, and chose my wife as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but for such qualities as would wear well;" and by Shenstone, in his Progress of Taste:—

> For humble ease, ye powers, I pray,
> That plain warm suit for every day!
> And pleasure and brocade bestow,
> To flaunt it once a month or so.
> The first for constant wear we want;
> The first, ye powers! for ever grant.
> But constant wear the last bespatters,
> And turns the tissue into tatters.

In Much Ado About Nothing (Act ii. sc. 5), Pedro asks Beatrice, "Will you have me, Lady?" and she answers, "No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days. Your Grace is too costly to wear every day." To Wordsworth belongs the praise of bringing out the full charm of the sentiment.

JULY 19TH.

I AM almost weary of watching
The minute drops from off the eaves.



A rainy day is a winter-luxury. A cold, wet, hazy, blowing night in December, gates swinging, trees crashing, storm howling

—that is enjoyable—it is the weather to finish Christabel in. How full of heat, light, and comfort everything is within doors! The flickering fire, beaten into a blaze, the bubbling urn, the rustled book, and all the scenery of a thoughtful fireside, rise to the memory. Cowper describes the hour which he delighted to lose in this waking dream, when he had drawn the chair up to the fender, and fastened the shutter that still rattled. See him gazing earnestly into the sleepy fire!—what is he looking at? In the parlour twilight, the history of his boyhood and youth lives again, with the pleasant garden of the parsonage he was born in; the path along which the gardener, Robin, drew him to school; and his mother, in that vesture of tissued flowers which he used to prick into paper with a pin. Sometimes his gayer heart disported itself in other dreams:—

> Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
> Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,
> Trees, churches, and strange visages, express'd
> In the red cinders, while with poring eye
> I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
> Not less amused have I, quiescent, watch'd
> The sooty films that play upon the bars
> Pendulous, and foreboding in the view
> Of superstition, prophesying still,
> Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.

I should like to see a catalogue of Hearth-literature, if the title may be compounded;

> Bright winter fires, that summer's part supply,

is the pleasing line of Cowley. The parlour twilight is instead of the sun playing on leaves and grass. What visions have been created, books planned, pictures designed, cathedrals built, and countries discovered, over dying embers! Thoughts of eloquence and devotion, at this hour moving and shining along the world,

were born in that glimmer. Ridley, watching out the last red coal in his cell, may have seen the Church rising in her stateliness and purity; Raleigh have called up cities of gold, and forests of fruit-bearing trees; and Milton, in the chimney-corner at Horton, have sketched the dim outline of Comus. Therefore a wet winter evening is a very agreeable characteristic of the season. The wood-ashes are aids to reflection. But a rainy day in summer is altogether different: it is the Faëry's dancing-hall, with the lights extinguished. A paper network flutters where the fire ought to be; a red cinder, for the parish-clerk to disappear in, would be worth its weight in silver. The eye wanders up and down, and finds no rest; the room itself wears a heavy, disconsolate expression; the table and chairs are miserable; the dozing fly mopes on the damp glass; and the flowers in the window look like mourners, just returned wet through from the funeral of Flora. Bamfylde has painted the sorrows of the season:

> —— Mute is the mournful plain;
> Silent the swallow sits beneath the thatch,
> And vacant hind hangs pensive o'er his hatch,
> Counting the frequent drops from reeded eaves.

JULY 20TH.

THANKS to the Germans, we are beginning to be on visiting terms with the old Greek families. A scholar is now able to call on Pericles, and even to form a fair estimate of the domestic arrangements of the middle classes. The drawing-room and kitchen are restored. Becker has done much for this branch of study. He sketches an Athenian lodging-house with something of Flemish minuteness; and a lasting value is given to his descriptions by the authority of the original authors, whose words

he quotes. This is a feature of criticism not to be despised. He is a naturalist, looking off his lecture to point to the real specimens in glass cases.

People are mistaken in supposing that Greek cities had no inns. In early times—the heroic ages—private hospitality entertained the wayfarer; but, as intercourse increased, and strangers crowded to Athens and Corinth, ampler accommodation was required. The great festivals were the race-weeks of our county towns. We learn from a speech of Æschines, that the Athenian ambassadors to Philip took up their abode at an hotel; just as the Papal Nuncio might have his apartments at Mivart's.

We are reminded of the antiquity of all novelties, in the rage for autographs among Greek collectors. The bibliomaniac of Lucian pleased himself with thinking that he possessed the harangues of Demosthenes, and the history of Thucydides, in the handwriting of the respective authors. Thus the Roxburgh Club had its type in a departed race; and Will Wimble re-appears in Athens, with the same accumulating taste that excited the mirth of Sir Roger de Coverley. The shop and the counter have undergone slight changes. At Pompeii is, or was not long ago, the outline of a head with a pen stuck behind the ear, as you may see it every day in London. The Greek banker was a person of importance, and conducted his business on the most approved principle. He allowed a nominal interest on deposits which he lent at a larger rate,—sometimes so high as thirty-six per cent. The circular note of Coutts had its original in the symbolon, or mark, that authenticated the letter of credit. The cheque was unknown; but the leathern token of Carthage promised the future food of speculation and commerce:

> Blest paper credit! last and best supply,
> That lends corruption lighter wings to fly.

In-door life was extremely curious. An Oxford fellow, arriving on a short visit to Alcibiades, would have been surprised at his bed-room. The four-post sinks into contempt. The Athenian bedstead was sometimes made of precious wood, with ivory feet. The mattrass was stuffed with wool, and covered with linen or leathern sheets. The white pillow-case was not yet; but the coverlets were splendid—sometimes composed of variegated feathers, perhaps like the Mexican cloaks. The table was usually round, veneered with maple, and supported by feet of bronze. An elegant tripod contained the fire which heated the chamber in cold weather.

But the dinner-hour would have drawn forth all the wonder of the visitor. In the most fashionable establishment there was no table-cloth. A towel was handed round at the conclusion of the repast, but crumb of bread fulfilled the duty of the *serviette*. A particular kind of dough was set apart for the purpose. The custom, oddly enough, seems to correspond with one in Abyssinia, minutely recorded by Bruce, and confirmed by later travellers. In the absence of knives and forks, spoons of gold were distributed among the guests. The bread was handed in small baskets, woven of slips of ivory. The wine was cooled by lumps of snow, and the first toast was, To the Good Genius!

Becker vindicates the medical profession in Greece from the ridicule which has often been cast on it. The Romans, prejudiced against physicians, contented themselves with the healing wisdom of a domestic slave; or, like Cato, entrusted their health to the guardianship of a Latin Buchan. The Athenian, more nervous, was always calling in the Doctor. A sort of diploma, in the form of a permission from the State, together with a certificate of attendance on medical lectures, was necessary to admit a candidate into practice. There were also physicians paid by the Government,

and answering in some measure to our hospital or dispensary doctors. The Athenian physician was the general practitioner of modern times, and compounded his own medicines. Some patients came to the surgery; others he attended at their own homes. His manners and speech appear to have been sufficiently rough and unflattering. The saying of a consulting-surgeon in remote years—"Patroclus is dead, who was a much better man than you"—reads like an anticipatory reminiscence of Mr. Abernethy. But medical science was of the lowest order. It is a question whether dissection was permitted. Becker alludes to a passage in Plutarch, describing an operation upon the larynx of a man who had swallowed a fish-bone; and he notices the opening of the body of Aristomenes by the Lacedæmonians, "to see whether it contained anything extraordinary." The late John Bell admitted that Hippocrates dissected apes. Haydon's first lecture on painting may be consulted for the anatomical knowledge of Greek artists. He appeals to Burke, who said—"The author of Laocoon was as deeply skilled as Halle or Gaubius, and hence has been able to give that consistency of expression which prevails through the whole body, from the face, through every muscle, to the ends of the toes and fingers."

It is remarkable that Hippocrates speaks of acquaintance with the physical constitution of man, as belonging less to the art of medicine than of design. Winckleman thought that ancient painters studied the forms of animals with reference to the human figure; and he discovered in the heads of Jupiter and Hercules the characteristics of the lion and bull. Mr. Eastlake sees in the study of comparative anatomy the "knowledge which would best enable them to define, and, therefore, to exaggerate, when necessary, the human characteristics." It should, however, be remembered, that Sir Charles Bell, who bestowed much thought

on the anatomy and philosophy of expression, dissented from this view.

But I must not prolong my stay in old Athens, although these glimpses of life, two or three thousand years old, cannot fail to be entertaining. After all, Cheapside is only a Greek street under another name. Even the toyshop was there, with every variety of playthings, from the ivory bed to the clay doll painted. Nursery rhymes were widely circulated; and the veritable English "BOGY" enjoyed its reign of terror, as "Akko," or "Alphito." Perhaps a "Parent's Assistant," by a popular Greek Edgeworth, may yet reward some educational unroller of manuscripts.

Meanwhile, the question naturally arises, why ancient life and history are so rarely adapted to the purposes of instructive fiction.

A tale of manners should refer to antiquity so remote as to become venerable, or present a vivid reflection of scenes passing round us. The novel accordingly has a twofold aspect, as it portrays the past, or present—our ancestors, or ourselves. And with regard to the former, it may be historical or domestic; or both may be blended and interwoven; the historical being the pattern, and the domestic the thread in which it is worked. Perhaps the Quentin Durward of Scott affords the happiest example of the united, as the Vicar of Wakefield of the separated, elements. Few travellers, however, have penetrated into the country of the rich ancients. Greek and Latin life, with one or two exceptions, remains unpainted. People know it chiefly from languid epics.

The Anacharsis of Barthelemy is not free from the defects of Glover. Becker compares his characters to antique statues, in French costume and lace ruffles. "Telemachus" still stands alone.

JULY 21ST.

SITTING under a tree this evening, with the Faëry Queen in my hand, it was curious to watch the sunset falling like dew-



drops through the boughs, and spotting the page with golden green. I remembered how often, at Cambridge, in the chapel

of King's, I had read the Bible in the glow of the painted windows, until every letter seemed to be illuminated like an old missal. Spenser ought to be studied, as he wrote, in the sun. His system of composition resembled the Venetian style of painting, as his rich epithets answer to its warmth of tone. His landscapes are English, with southern light streaming round them, as in these verses:

> Now when the rosy-fingered morning faire,
> Weary of aged Tithone's saffron bed,
> Had spread her purple robe through dewy aire,
> And the high hills Titan discovered.

The warm blush of the morning, and the far-off purple rim of the hills, have the lucid depth and splendour of Titian. And if the colour of Spenser be Venetian, his combinations are often Flemish. A picture of Rubens is a commentary on a stanza.

He has been justly regarded as the painter's poet. They who esteem him least, admire his rare eye for effect and artistic arrangement. Hence Walpole told his arid correspondent, Mr. Cole, that he was building a bower, and feared that he must go and read Spenser, wading through all his allegories to get at a picture. He would easily have found it. For Spenser is not the representative of a single school, but the abstract and epitome of each. The brilliant flush of his general manner belongs to Rubens; his feminine expression reflects the serenity of Guido; the melody of his language breathes the bloom of Correggio; his wilder contortions of imagination recal the fierce audacity of Spranger; and his dark sketches of ugliness and crime foretel Salvator Rosa: not as we see him in the tossing pines, the driving hurricanes, and the swarthy brigands of his landscape: but as he startles us in his historical portraits, especially in the "Regulus" at Cobham. I might add that Spenser's passion for sumptuous processions, splendid companies, and variegated festivals, proclaims his relation-

ship to Paul Veronese, who is unsurpassed for his exquisite disposal of lights, Eastern dresses, and gorgeous array of priests and warriors.

Spenser's portraits are, in the truest sense, Venetian. Titian, taking up the rude back grounds of Philippo Lippi, raised landscape-painting into a separate branch of art; but the historical pencil succeeded equally in trees and nature. In the Faëry Queen, the harmony between faces and scenery is striking. I venture to suggest another peculiarity in the poet's characters. The senatorial dignity of Titian's heads is felt by every spectator; Spenser awakens the same feeling of awe and interest, by the beautiful haze of his allegory. The softening shade into which he withdraws his heroes and heroines, both deepens the lustre of their features, and lends a solemnity to their expression.

With all his beauties, he is not, and will not be, a favourite of the many. His cantos are never read for their story. The criticism of Pope's old lady is still true. They are picture-galleries, of which the eye of taste never grows weary. It sinks down into the verdant depth of a stanza, as of the greenest landscape of Albano. But allegory has defects inherent and unconquerable. Gay worlds of fiction, hanging upon nothing, and launched into the wide expanse of imagination, must be shone over and warmed by common feelings and life. When that light and heat are wanting, the eye may be dazzled, but the heart is untouched. The reader strays through an enchanted garden, and sighs for the familiar voices of affection, and the charms of home endearment. Like the Trojan exile in the Latin paradise, he opens his arms in vain to a shadowy Anchises; and the child cannot embrace his father in the Elysium of fancy.

These are the difficulties of parabolic description. If Spenser could not bend the bow, what hand may try? The English taste

turns aside from allegory in its fairest form. Opie complained that no landscape was admired, except a view of some particular place; and Payne Knight declared that he had seen more delight manifested at a piece of wax-work, or a mackerel painted on a deal board, than he had ever observed to be excited by the Apollo, or Transfiguration.

JULY 22ND.

JOHNSON says something about the impossibility of a conversationist being honest. No account can answer his cheques. To keep up appearances, he draws gold under other names. Talkers in books are not exempt from the difficulties or penalties of their brethren round the table. Henceforth, Mr. Sydney Smith must relinquish the most striking feature in his famous portrait of a poor ecclesiastic: "A picture is drawn of a clergyman with 130*l.* per annum, who combines all moral, physical, and intellectual advantages: a learned man, dedicating himself intensely to the care of his parish; of charming manners and dignified deportment; six feet two inches high, beautifully proportioned, with a magnificent countenance, expressive of all *the cardinal virtues and the Ten Commandments.*"—(Works, T. iii. 200.) The proprietor of the phrase is Miss Seward, in a letter to G. Hardinge (T. ii. 250), about a gentleman who was not so good as he looked: "So reserved as were his manners! *and his countenance! a very tablet upon which the Ten Commandments seemed written.*"

JULY 23RD.

I NEVER saw so many glow-worms together as on this balmy evening; and their sparkle is unusually vivid, being occasioned, I suppose, by the delicious weather; for the glow-worm grows brighter or dimmer, as the air is warmer or colder. All the bank seems to be on fire with these diamonds of the night, as Darwin calls them. If Titania had overturned a casket of jewels in a quarrel with Oberon, the grass could not have looked gayer. Thomson describes the appearance with his usual liveliness:

> Among the crooked lanes, on ev'ry hedge
> The glow-worm lights his gem, and through the dark
> A moving radiance twinkles.

Perhaps he is slightly astray in his zoology: for although the male has two spots of faint lustre, the female is the real star of the wood-path. A double portion of light is her compensation for the loss of wings. Her lamp is to bring to her the friend whom she is unable to visit. She may be seen in a summer evening climbing up a blade of grass, to make herself more conspicuous. Dear Mr. White, of Selborne, compared her to the classic lady who lighted the tower across the Hellespont, and of whom such pretty stories are related.

Coleridge, in a note to one of his own poems—

> Nor now, with curious sight,
> I mark the glow-worm as I pass
> Move with green radiance through the grass,
> An emerald of light—

drew attention to Wordsworth's epithet of *green*, applied to the light of this insect. Whereupon Miss Seward wrote to Cary, in 1798, "That light is perfectly stellar; and Ossian calls the stars

green in twenty parts of his poetry, published before Wordsworth, who is a very young man, was born." The same ingenious lady mentions her feeling of surprise in childhood, at finding the verdant colour of the stars and glow-worms unobserved by poetic



eyes. And certainly she appears to have forestalled Wordsworth, in a line of her "Llangollen Vale:"

While glow-worm lamps effuse a pale green light.

After all, it is only a question of reproduction, for the green brightness is a literal translation of Lucretius.

The "twinkle" of Thomson is quite as illustrative; and in a Latin poem, written a hundred years ago, by a Mr. Bedingfield, the glow-worm is shown casting a tremulous gleam along the wet path. This wavering lustre is caused by the insect's power of withdrawing its light, as instinct may suggest. Glow-worms are the food of night-birds, which of course track them by their shining. To put out the candle, therefore, is the surest way of escaping the robber; and, perhaps, their apprehension of enemies may account for the short time of their illumination. Mr. Nowell quotes a curious experiment of White, who carried two glow-worms from a field into his garden, and saw them extinguish their lamps between eleven and twelve o'clock. Later entomologists confirm this singular relation. In any anthology about glow-worms, Shakspere would scarcely be allowed to compete for the prize. He never notices them without some incorrectness. His strangest mistake was placing the light in the eyes; whereas a momentary glance would have convinced him that it proceeded from the tail.

But I have been turning glow-worms to an use this evening, which no naturalist probably ever thought of—reading the Psalms by their cool green radiance. I placed six of the most luminous insects I could find in the grass at the top of the page; moving them from verse to verse, as I descended. The experiment was perfectly successful. Each letter became clear and legible, making me feel deeply and gratefully the inner life of the Psalmist's adoration: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy goodness."

I know that poetry has turned the fire-fly into a lantern. Southey enables Madoc to see the features of his beautiful guide by the flame of two fire-flies, which she kept prisoners in a cage,

or net of twigs, underneath her garment. But, surely, I am the discoverer of the glow-worm-taper. And it answers the purpose admirably. By the help of this emerald of the hedge-row and mossy bank, I can read, not only the hymns of saints to God, but God's message to me. As the glittering grass of the Indian hills taught me wisdom, so these glow-worms are a light to my eyes and a lantern to my feet. I ought to employ my every-day blessings and comforts as I have been using these insects. I could not have read "Even-Song" among the trees by night, unless I had moved the lamp up and down. One verse shone, while the rest of the page was dark. Patience alone was needed. Line by line, the whole Psalm grew bright. What a lesson and consolation to me in my journey through the world! Perhaps to-day is a cloudy passage in my little calendar: I am in pain, or sorrow, of mind, or body; my head throbs, or my heart is disquieted within me. But the sequestered paths of the Gospel-garden are studded with glow-worms. I have only to stoop and find them. Yesterday was healthfuller and more joyous. My spirits were gayer; my mind was peacefuller: kind friends visited me; or God seemed to lift up the light of His countenance upon me. These recollections are my lanterns in the dark. The past lights up the present. I move my glow-worms lower on the page, and read to-day by yesterday.

Nor for myself only should these thoughts be cherished. Every beam of grace that falls upon my path ought to throw its reflection along my neighbour's. Whatever happens to one is for the instruction of another. Even the glow-worm, humblest of stars, has its shadow. Boyle, the friend of Evelyn, makes some excellent remarks on the spiritual eloquence of woods, fields, and water, and all their swarming inhabitants. They who pass summer-time in the country are especially called to listen and look. The

man who goes forth to his work and his labour until the evening, has his teacher by his side. The haymakers, who

Drive the dusky wave along the mead,



may remind him of the penitent, who said that his heart was withered like grass, so that he forgot to eat his bread; the leafy elm, that shelters the noon-day rest of the reaper, should tell him

how the man, who stood not in the way of sinners, is "like a tree planted by the water side, of which the leaf shall not wither;" and the orchard, that gives shade and fragrance to the cottage-door, ought to speak of the ripening warmth of Christian faith, which is to "bring forth more fruit in its age."

When a devout heart knows really how and what to observe, it has advanced a great way towards the understanding and application of the Apostle's assurance, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." The glow-worm, like the star, has its speech and language. The Christian is at church in his toil and his loneliness; when the sun shines, or the moon rises. The foot of his ladder may rest on a tuft of grass, or a few flowers, but the top reaches to heaven. Most happy are they

> To whom some viewless teacher brings
> *The secret lore of rural things.*

I am not interested by any feature of Luther's private character, so much as by his affectionate and thoughtful contemplation of nature. A bough loaded with cherries, and put on his table, a few fishes from a pond in his garden, a rose or other flower, awoke in his breast feelings of gratefulness and piety towards Him, who sends sunshine and dew upon the just and the unjust. One evening, when he saw a bird perching itself on a branch for the night, he exclaimed—"That little bird has chosen his shelter, and is about to go to sleep in tranquillity; it has no disquietude, neither does it consider where it shall rest to-morrow night, but it sits in peace on that slender bough, leaving it to God to provide for its wants." This is the very temper inculcated in the Divine exhortation—"*Consider the lilies how they grow.*"

JULY 24TH.

I HAVE no very strong confidence in the literary truth of Mr. Pinkerton, but I thank him for Walpole's lively letter, June 25, 1785. The critical opinions are pleasant and sparkling, although they are false. He traces Virgil's reputation to grace of style:—"A Roman farmer might not understand the Georgics, but a Roman courtier was made to understand farming; and Virgil could captivate a lord of Augustus' bed-chamber." This is good; but Walpole had imperfect views of the Latin epic. He denied its power over the passions, although the writer's genius lay chiefly in the pathetic.

He sees the colouring of Albano in Milton's Eden. And there is an air of serious purity about his landscapes that may justify the simile. Everything breathes of repose:

> —— umbrageous grots, and caves
> Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
> Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
> Luxuriant: meanwhile murm'ring waters fall
> Down the slope hills, dispers'd, or in a lake,
> That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
> Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.

The most pleasing circumstance connected with Albano is the anecdote told of him by Felibien—that his beautiful wife was his model for Graces, while his children sat for Cherubs. It is interesting to contrast the solemn hues and brooding stillness of his trees with the works of the Flemish painters, whose favourite subject was also Paradise; by which they understood a breadth of country rich with every shade of vegetation—

> Gay tinted woods their massy foliage threw;
> Breathed but an air of heaven, and all the grove

As if instinct with living spirit grew,
Rolling its verdant gulfs of every hue.

Walpole finds in the swan an emblem of Racine: "The colouring of the swan is pure; his attitudes are graceful; he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet are ugly; his walk not natural. He can soar, but it is with difficulty. Still, the impression a swan leaves is that of grace. So does Racine." Gray placed him next to Shakspere; and Mr. Hallam thinks that in one passage, where they have both taken the same idea from Plutarch, the French poet has excelled his English brother:—

SHAKSPERE.	RACINE.
Thy demon, that's the spirit that tempts thee, is Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable, Where Cæsar is not; but near him, thy angel Becomes a fear, as being o'erpowered.	Mon génie étonné tremble devant le sien.

Certainly the single line of Racine embodies a larger spirit than we find in Shakspere's four verses. With regard to grace, no comparison can be allowed. The style of Racine is faultless. Excessive art gives artlessness.

Walpole's habits of thought and study contracted his critical vision. What he did see he saw clearly. But a small circle bounded his view. We find him here ridiculing Thomson. He proposed a parallel for the Seasons and Pleasures of Imagination in the Kings of Hearts and Diamonds; dressed in robes of gaudy patches that do not unite, and only differing from the Knaves by the length of their trains. Akenside may fight his own battles; but think of a man of elegance—who set the fashion in taste—presuming to insult one of the truest poets who ever struck a lyre! Every day adds new strength to the judgment of Pope, that the

faculty of understanding a poem is not less a gift than that of writing it.

However, literary history keeps Walpole in countenance. People have neither eyes nor ears for talents they are without. Crabbe, who was domesticated with Burke in the splendour of his genius and fame—sauntering with him through the garden, or resting upon stiles—had treasured up no sayings of his wonderful friend. That conversation, which excited the alarm and quickened the indolence of Johnson, melted like snow from the memory of the poet. Barrow had no sympathy with Dryden, and Shenstone could not discover the humour of Cervantes. But a more extraordinary instance of a taste paralysed on one side occurs in the Epistle of Collins to Sir Thomas Hanmer, upon his edition of Shakspere. He refuses him any power of depicting womanly character. The soft touch of Fletcher might lay bloom on the cheek of beauty; but Shakspere's pencil was suited only to imbrown coarser manhood:—

> Of softer mould the gentle Fletcher came,
> The next in order, as the next in name;
> With pleased attention, midst his scenes we find
> Each glowing thought that warms the female mind;
> His every strain the Smiles and Graces own,
> *But stronger Shakspere felt for man alone.*

What is Walpole's sneer at Thomson to this? And who will hereafter complain of critical insensibility, or twisted eyesight? The author of the Odes to the Passions and Evening was blind and deaf to Miranda, Imogen, Constance, Juliet, Desdemona, Katherine, and the long gallery of Nature's beauties.

One poet there was whom Walpole could comprehend and admire with all his heart—Dr. Darwin. He told Hannah More that the Botanic Garden was an admirable poem, abounding in similes, "beautiful, fine, and sometimes sublime." The Triumph

of Flora he considered to be "enchantingly imagined;" and the description of the creation of the world out of chaos, to be the grandest passage in any author or language! Thomson is a king of diamonds, with a train; and Darwin is the brother and companion of Milton. I am not running down the Lichfield Claudian. In his own way he is surprising. In a certain theatrical splendour of impersonation, such as the man escaping from a house on fire—

> Pale Danger glides along the falling roof—

he may be compared with Mason. His descriptions of the infant on the mother's breast, the army of Cambyses in the desert, and Love riding on the lion, are worthy of being remembered with Gray. He is astonishingly happy in occasional epithets, as when he speaks of the *bristling* plumes of the eagle. And who may excel the following piece of insect-life?—

> Stay thy soft murmuring waters, gentle rill;
> Hush, whispering winds; ye rustling leaves, be still;
> Rest, silver butterflies, your quivering wings;
> Alight, ye beetles, from your airy rings;
> Ye painted moths, your gold-eyed plumage furl,
> Bow your wide horns, your spiral trunks uncurl;
> Glitter, ye glow-worms, on your mossy beds;
> Descend, ye spiders, on your lengthen'd threads;
> Glide here, ye horned snails, with varnish'd shells;
> Ye bee-nymphs, listen in your waxen cells.

I may say of Darwin, in the language of one of his friends, even more grandiloquent than himself, though shrewd and clever withal; his poetry "is a string of poetical brilliants; but the eye will be apt to want the interstitial black velvet to give effect to their lustre." And now that the gossip of his flatterers about the "softness of Claude," the "sublimity of Salvator," &c., is forgotten, criticism may fairly give him his due. Cary compared the Botanic Garden to a picture by Breughel—flower or velvet

Breughel, as he was called. And the resemblance is obvious. If Darwin had painted a Madonna and Child, he would have put them, as Breughel did, in a garland of flowers. James Montgomery writes: "His productions are undistinguished by sentiment or pathos. He presents nothing but pageants to the eye, and leaves nothing to the imagination; every point and object being made out in noon-day clearness, when the sun is nearly vertical, and the shadow is most contracted."

He worked after a bad pattern. Akenside was his favourite; and the reader feels that oppression of light which Gray apprehended in his own splendid fragment on Education and Government. Where all is finished and all shines, the general effect fails.

JULY 26TH.

THE longer we live among books and men, the less we ought to be surprised by anything we read or hear. But this morning my caution was quite overturned by a philosopher and a poet. Thus writes Sir Thomas Browne:—"Another misery there is in affection, that whom we truly love like ourselves we forget their looks, nor can our memory retain the idea of their faces; and it is no wonder, for they are ourselves, and our affection makes their looks our own." And this is the commentary of Mr. Coleridge:—"A thought I have often had, and once expressed it in a line. The fact is certain." Strange delusion! The words should be reversed. Rather say:—We forget our own faces in the faces of those whom we love. We disappear in them—have no living, breathing existence, apart from theirs. Our recollection is not limited to the features, the shape of the countenance, the complexion. Nothing has faded. The colour of the eyes in the

changefulness of pleasure, sadness, health, or pain, lives before us, as if Titian, or Lely, had kept watching them with a pencil. No canvas absorbs colours, like memory. It makes everything minister to itself. A field-path, a seat under trees, a garden-bed, a particular flower, recal the posture, the look, even the glow of sunset, or fainter moonshine, that tinged the cheek or hair of a dear companion in



some hour of unusual interest. John Newton, Cowper's friend, said, in after life, that the face of the young girl whom he so passionately loved, used to shine down upon the lonely deck as he stood at the wheel, steering the ship through the tempest. Amid foam and lightning, or the dreadfuller storms of his own troubled spirit, there was she—rebuking, cheering, and blessing him.

This reviving influence applies, with a pathetic fulness, to the departed—the lost. Affection has its pure crystal, never stained nor broken except in death. The hand and the mirror fall together. On this bright surface of love's remembrance, we behold our friends with the clearness of natural faces reflected in a glass; and we see them in connexion with the parting, closing scene. That room may have crumbled before the hammer, or the saw; its furniture may be scattered, or destroyed. But for us all things remain as they were. Not a chair has been moved; not a fold of drapery has been rumpled by time. The Bible lies open upon the bed; the book of prayer has the familiar page turned down; the watch hangs by the pillow; the "asking eye" turns to ours! Thus, indeed, affection makes the dear faces always present to us; and instead of their looks being effaced, we forget our own.

JULY 27TH.

THE "Homeric" question, as I may call it, seems to be the silliest that ever was put to a critical vote. Schlegel denied that the poet was blind—Coleridge, that he lived. One gives him eyes; the other takes his life. They who adopt the German theory of multiplied authorship must be ignorant of the unity of the Iliad. It is as much built on a plan as St. Paul's; the master-mind is felt in every part. It would be as true to call Wren a concrete name for the bricklayers of the Cathedral, as Homer a traditional synonyme of the Iliad. However, I have nothing to do with the quarrels of ingenious persons, poetical or otherwise:—

'T were wiser far
For me, enamour'd of sequester'd scenes
And charm'd with rural beauty, to repose
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,
My languid limbs when summer sears the plains;
Or when rough winter rages, on the soft
And sheltered sofa, while the nitrous air
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth.



I only allude to the controversy for the sake of a very admirable remark of Pope, in his Preface, that circumstances, swiftly rising up to the eye of Homer, had their *impressions taken off at a heat.* That dilation and spreading abroad of

description, which is known to taste under the name of "circumstance," forms an important element of poetic art. We see it in the prologue to the Canterbury Tales; the Prioress, her coral on her arm; the Frère, in semi-cope of double worsted; the Poor Scholar; the wife of Bath,—each has the distinctiveness of Vandyck. Reynolds condemns this minuteness. But who was more observant than Titian of each separate colour and shade, even in a velvet or stuff? S. del. Piombo gives, in one of his portraits, five tints of black,—each carefully discriminated. "Circumstance" is found most abundantly in that poet to whom Pope's criticism applied. It comes out with startling vividness in the dress and weapons of his chieftains. He tries the temper of a sword with the delight of an armourer. We notice the same military feeling in Ariosto; yet the Paladins of the Orlando do not charm us like the heroes of the Iliad. The Italian wanted seriousness; he had not the undoubting mind of Homer. When he girds on a sword, he turns aside to conceal a smile. Spenser, with his pausing, earnest step, approaches nearer to his Greek ancestor. Look at Tristram (F. Q., b. vi. canto 2, stanza 39) bending over the dead knight:

> Long fed his greedy eyes with the fair sight
> Of the bright metal, shining like sun-rays,
> Handling and turning them a thousand ways.

This is in the truest spirit of Ajax plundering a Trojan. The taking of "impressions off at a heat" is also conspicuous in the Homeric battles and wounds. In the sixteenth book of the Iliad, Patroclus, leaping from his chariot, seized a stone which his hand *covered*.

It is in the nature of "circumstance" to attract every little thing towards it. Nothing is too common. Mr. Keble, in one of his Prælections (ix.), suggests a happy illustration from the

history of Madame de la Rochejacqueline, so famous in the sad story of La Vendée. Overwhelmed by grief, plundered of her property, and flying from cruel enemies, she nevertheless adds, that while following the litter of her wounded husband, her feet were *pinched by tight shoes.*

The descriptions which are natural in Homer, become picturesque in his successors. He indicates—they delineate. He hastily touches a figure into the picture—they bestow skill and toil upon the background and accessories. He produces his effect by single strokes. The *slender* tongue of his wolves is the one scratch of the Master. They work out their design by composition and costume, light and shade. The following specimens, from two most dissimilar writers, will show the artistic quality of the poetical mind in its elements:—

MATERIALS FOR LANDSCAPE.

DARWIN.

The rush-thatched cottage on the purple moor,
Where ruddy children frolic round the door;
The moss-grown antlers of the aged oak,
The shaggy locks that fringe the colt unbroke,
The bearded goat, with nimble eyes that glare
Through the long tissue of his hoary hair,
As with quick foot he climbs some ruin'd wall,
And crops the ivy which prevents its fall,—
With rural charms the tranquil mind delight,
And form a picture to th' admiring sight.

CIRCUMSTANCE.

TENNYSON.

Two children in two neighbour villages
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;
Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
Wash'd with still rains, and daisy-blossomed;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred;
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

And much to be admired is the painting of the Countess of Winchelsea, in whose poetry Wordsworth found the only

new images of outward nature, between Paradise Lost and The Seasons:



When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;
When freshen'd grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence springs the woodbine and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip shelter'd grows;

Whilst now a paler hue the fox-glove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes,—
When odours, which declin'd repelling day,
Through temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darken'd groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose;—
When the loos'd horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthen'd shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear.

I think that Gilpin's definition of the Picturesque is sufficiently accurate;—that it includes all objects which please from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting. The suggestion of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that "Picturesque is somewhat synonymous to the word taste," I am quite unable to understand; although his remark is obviously just, that Michael Angelo and Raffaelle have nothing of it; while Rubens and the Venetian painters exhibit it in every variety of shape and combination. That the Picturesque is distinct from the sublime or the beautiful, cannot be questioned. A certain roughness and irregularity are necessary to its existence. An old mill, with intricate wood-work, clinging mosses, weather-strains, and

The dark round of the dripping wheel;

the dim broken lights of a cathedral; the glimmering hollows and shattered branches of trees; rough-hewn park-pales,—each and all of these are features of the Picturesque. Salvator Rosa and Rubens may represent it in colours; Spenser and Collins in words. If classic literature be included, Virgil would stand at the head of the school. Taking, therefore, Picturesque to mean any object, or group, susceptible of representation by pencil or



pen, the following, added to the preceding specimens, will display it under its most striking manifestations :—

A LARK SINGING IN A RAINBOW.

WARTON.

Fraught with a transient frozen shower,
If a cloud should haply lower,
Sailing o'er the landscape dark,
Mute on a sudden is the lark;
But when gleams the sun again
O'er the pearl-besprinkled plain,
And from behind his watery veil
Looks through the thin descending hail;
She mounts, and, lessening to the sight,
Salutes the blithe return of light,
And high her tuneful track pursues
Through the rainbow's melting hues.

A FACE IN THE WATER.

MILTON.

——I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky;
As I bent down to look, just opposite
A shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd
Bending to look on me; I started back,
It started back; but, pleased, I soon return'd;
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love—there I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warn'd me—

THE DOOM OF LADURLAD.

SOUTHEY.

There, where the Curse had stricken him,
There stood the miserable man,
There stood Ladurlad, with loose hanging arms,

A CLOUD KINDLED BY THE SUN.

AKENSIDE.

——as when a cloud
Of gath'ring hail, with limpid crusts of ice
Enclosed, and obvious to the beaming sun,
Collects his large effulgence, straight the heavens
With equal flames present on either hand
The radiant visage; Persia stands at gaze
Appall'd, and on the brink of Ganges doubts
The snowy-vested seer in Mithra's name,
To which the fragrance of the South shall rise,
To which his warbled orisons ascend.

A FOG SCENE.

THOMSON.

——the dim-seen river seems
Sullen and slow to roll the misty wave,
Even in the height of noon oppress'd, the sun
Sheds weak, and blunt, his wide-refracted ray;
Whence glaring oft, with many a broaden'd orb,
He frights the nations. Indistinct on earth,
Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life
Objects appear—and 'wilder'd o'er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic; till at last
Wreath'd dim around, in deeper circles still
Successive closing, sits the general fog,
Unbounded o'er the world.

A SEA VIEW.

DYER.

——with easy course
The vessels glide, unless their speed be stopped
By dead calms, that oft lie on those smooth seas,

SOUTHEY.

And eyes of idiot wandering.
Was it a dream? alas!
He heard the river flow,
He heard the crumbling of the pile,
He heard the wind which showered
The thin white ashes round.

DYER.

While every zephyr sleeps;
Then the shrouds drop,
The downy feather on the cordage hung
Moves not; the flat sea shines like yellow gold
Fused in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of some old temple wide; but where so wide,



There motionless he stood,
As if he hoped it were a dream,
And feared to move lest he should prove
The actual misery;
And still at times he met Kehama's eye,
Kehama's eye that fastened on him still.

In old or later time, its marble floor
Did ever temple boast as this, which here
Spreads its bright level many a league around?
At solemn distances its pillars rise,
Sofala's blue rocks, Mozambic's palmy steeps,
And lofty Madagascar's glittering shores.

JULY 29TH.

RENEWED my acquaintance with Bossuet's noblest sermon upon the Resurrection. How opposite the whole system of French eloquence is to our own,—the Henriade to Paradise Lost—Corneille to Shakspere! Perhaps the aptest parallel might be found in Père la Chaise and the churchyard of an English village. One is recognised by its dressed walks, bouquets of flowers, and sentimental inscriptions; the other by daisies, heaps of turf, and monitory texts strewed over "the rude forefathers of the hamlet." Sparkling conceits, artificial blossoms, and stage sorrow, abound even in the master-pieces of Bossuet, Massillon, and Flechier. Sterne hit the false taste of the French Pulpit in Mr. Shandy's comment on the Corporal's discourse: "'I like it well—'tis dramatic, and there is something in that way of writing, when skilfully managed, which catches the attention.' 'We preach much in that way with us,' said Dr. Slop. 'I know that very well,' said my father, but in a tone and manner which disgusted Dr. Slop, full as much as his assent, simply, would have pleased him."

But Père la Chaise is shone over by the sun. That, at least, is natural and true. And the sermon often brightens up with the warmth of genuine feeling or imagination. The following picture of a journey of life is coloured with exceeding power. I give a hasty and free copy—an etching of a picture:—

La vie humaine est semblable à un chemin; dans l'issue est un précipice affreux; on nous en avertit dès le premier pas; mais la loi est prononcée, il faut avancer toujours. Je voudrois retourner sur mes pas: "Marche! Marche!" Un

Human life resembles a path ending in a frightful precipice. We are warned of it from our first step; but the law is passed—we must advance always. I would retrace my steps—"Forward! Forward!" An irre-

poids invincible, une force invincible nous entraîne ; il faut sans cesse avancer vers le précipice. Mille traverses, mille peines nous fatiguent, et nous inquiètent dans la route ; encore si je pouvois éviter ce précipice affreux. Non, non, il faut marcher ; il faut courir ; telle est la rapidité des années. On se console pourtant ; parceque de temps en temps on rencontre des objets qui nous divertissent, des eaux courantes, des fleurs qui passent. On voudroit arrêter ; "Marche ! Marche !" Et cependant on voit tomber derrière soi tout ce qu'on avoit passé ; fracas effroyable, inévitable ruine ! On se console, parcequ'on emporte quelques fleurs cueillies en passant, qu'on voit se faner entre ses mains ; du matin au soir ; quelques fruits qu'on perd en les goutant ; enchantement ! Toujours entraîné, tu approche du gouffre affreux ; déjà tout commence à s'effacer ; les jardins sont moins fleuris, les fleurs moins brillantes, leurs couleurs moins vives, les prairies moins riantes, les eaux moins claires ; tout se ternit tout s'efface : l'ombre de la mort se présente ; on commence à sentir l'approche du gouffre fatal. Mais il faut aller sur le bord ; encore un pas. Déjà l'horreur trouble les sens ; la tête tourne ; les yeux s'égarent ; il faut marcher. On voudroit retourner en arrière ; plus de moyen ; tout est tombé ; tout est évanoui ; tout est échappé. Je n'ai besoin de vous dire que ce chemin, c'est la Vie ; que ce gouffre, c'est la Mort.

sistible weight, an unconquerable might, drags us along. For ever we draw nearer to the precipice. Thousand disappointments, thousand difficulties fatigue and disquiet us in the journey. Oh that I could escape this terrible precipice ! No, no ! still on. You must run ; so swift is the current of years. Now and then objects divert us—flowing streams, passing flowers ; we would halt. "Forward ! Forward !" Meanwhile, we see behind us everything falling as soon as passed—frightful crash, inevitable desolation ! Some flowers, gathered in the morning, perish in our hands before night ; some fruits we find, but they die in tasting. Strange enchantment ! Always hurried on, you draw nigh to the gulf. Already everything waxes dim, and goes out. Gardens grow less lovely, flowers less brilliant, meadows less gay, waters less clear. Everything fades ; everything disappears. The shadow of death confronts us ; we begin to feel the nearness of death. One step further—to the edge ! Already the soul is dismayed ; the head turns ; the eyes wander. But on ! We would turn back—we cannot ! All is fallen ; all is vanished ; all is slipped away. I need not tell you that this road is—Life ; that this gulf is—Death.

Mr. Rogers has paraphrased this description in his Human Life without preserving the grandeur of the original. The amplification of French prose destroys the refining processes of poetry. The gold is already beaten out. Ogilvie mentions a sermon by Fordyce, where the death of a wicked man is portrayed with strokes worthy of Demosthenes ; and he quotes this passage with immense applause : "The dreadful alternative entirely misgives him ;

he meditates the devouring abyss of eternity; he recoils as he eyes it." The italics are Ogilvie's. Whatever be the merit of the image, it is due to Bossuet, whom Fordyce copied.



JULY 30TH.

MR. WORDSWORTH sings in musical verse—

The blackbird in the summer trees,
The lark upon the hill,

> Let loose their carol when they please,
> Are quiet when they will.
> With nature never do they wage
> A foolish strife: they see
> A happy youth, and *their old age*
> *Is beautiful and free.*

The former part of the description is unquestionable, but the latter may be doubted. We know little of the closing days of birds—what they suffer or regret. One fact alone is ascertained; that their existence is short, in proportion to what I may venture to call their mental influences. The calm swan sails into his third century, and the emulative nightingale warbles away its sweet life, before it has seen a sixteenth summer. As to the happiness of old age among the feathered tribes, nothing can be told, because nothing is known. The bird in the cage evidently feels the burden of years, and often becomes dependent on friendly hands for assistance in its infirmities. Why should the patriarch of the trees escape the trials of a brother in confinement? Affection seldom survives the nest. A story is told of a thrush feeding a captive blackbird for ten days with tender assiduity. But an occasional example proves no rule. The whole subject of bird-manners and customs is full of lively and enduring interest. How much may the little musician, among the apple-bloom, know and feel in common with sad and thoughtful minds!—with Falkland, or Bishop Jewell?

The mere circumstance that a bird dreams is a link that fastens it to man. Beckstein mentions a bulfinch, which frequently fell from its perch in the terror of sleep, and became immediately tranquil and reassured by the voice of its mistress.

Birds may engage a man's study as well as himself. They enjoy some of his best and brightest emotions. They are loving and faithful. Their memory is quick and lasting. Old trees, shadowy eaves, and blossomy hedges, are known and revisited

year after year. Who can tell the rush of sorrow into the mind of the nightingale, landed from a Syrian garden about the 12th of April, and suspended in a parlour-nook on the following evening!



Its eye has a painful capacity of showing pain — the iris becomes contracted. And if birds have some of our feelings, they have more than our ingenuity. Not to mention their architecture and educational economy, they know the hour of the day

without clocks. The goat-sucker, or churn-owl, begins its lonely song at sunset, and never loses a minute; so that in a village where, in still weather, the Portsmouth evening gun is often heard, the boom and the note intermingle. If a signal were given, the two sounds could not be more even.

AUGUST 1ST.

MR. ROGERS is reported to have expressed astonishment that Prior is not more read. But the poet outlawed himself. Johnson's theory about his fitness for a lady's table will now find very few advocates. I wish it were otherwise. Some of his serious verses are marked by great beauty and elegance. Take these, to Bishop Sherlock:—

> No more with fruitless care and cheated strife,
> Chase fleeting pleasure through the maze of life.
>
> O save us still, still bless us with thy stay;
> O want thy heaven, till we have learnt the way.

His Solomon, though rough, and deficient in variety of interest, is sown with thoughts and images of pensive grace, that dwell on the memory:—

> Vex'd with the present moment's heavy gloom,
> Why seek we brightness from the years to come?
> Disturb'd and broken, like a sick man's sleep,
> Our troubled thoughts to distant prospects leap,
> Desirous still what flies us to o'ertake;
> *For hope is but the dream of those that wake.*

The last line is scarcely excelled by Pope's description of

> —— faith, our early immortality.

The thought is of Greek origin, as I was reminded by an accomplished Reviewer of this Journal. In 1696, a translated life of Aristotle was published, containing, among other sayings of the Philosopher, the remarkable sentiment — "Hope is the dream of one that awaketh:" and Prior was in the habit of borrowing illustrations from obscure books.

But the strength of Prior lay in his pleasant narrative and sparkling fictions; in those he was a master. One of his warmest admirers in this style was the author of John Gilpin: "What suggested to Johnson the thought that the 'Alma' was written in imitation of 'Hudibras,' I cannot conceive. In former years, they were both favourites of mine, and I often read them; but I never saw in them the least resemblance to each other, nor do I now, except that they are composed in verse of the same measure." Cowper's criticism is scarcely correct. Butler was evidently the model of Prior. The difference is that of temperament. The earlier poet seems to compose with the toil of thoughtful scholarship; the later, with the ease and enjoyment of a quick and sportive fancy. Hudibras has a learned, ponderous look and sound; Alma clatters along with the jingle of good spirits. Goldsmith, who could not understand it, admitted parts to be very fine.

We see in all the gayer efforts of Prior a fitness and economy of phrase, to which his contemporaries or successors have seldom attained. A comparison with Gray is the severest ordeal of criticism; but in the following stanza, Prior wins the crown. It is a curious instance of the vanity of all human genius, that the finer original should have been forgotten in the weaker imitation. The thought has become proverbial—a coin passed into the general currency; but the name of Prior is rubbed out:

PRIOR.

If we see right, we see our woes:
Then what avails it to have eyes?
From ignorance our comfort flows;
The only wretched are the wise.

GRAY.

Yet, ah! why should they know their fate,
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies?
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

Prior is numbered among the last of English rhymers who adorned heroines with Diana's quiver, or borrowed Mercury for a messenger. I do not see why the classic properties should have been abandoned as useless. The fictions of mythology are so many elements of the picturesque. In this sense the greatest painters regarded them. It is absurd to talk of belief or reality. The Olympian people are like the old armour of Rembrandt, or the purple mantle of Titian. I cannot agree with Johnson, that pagan machinery is uninteresting to us, or that a goddess in Virgil makes us weary. Besides being a source of the decorative in poetry and art, Greek and Latin mythology filled up the want of domestic interest. In the Æneid, the mother of the hero sheds the charms of womanhood over the adventures and perils of her son. She diffuses a sense of beauty, like summer-time. The reader never loses sight of Venus. Or, if she recede from the eye, the colouring bloom of her face and robe still flows along the narrative; as the sunshine, sinking behind thick trees for a moment, leaves the grass warm with its recent splendour.

AUGUST 2ND.

AMUSEMENT is the waking sleep of labour; when it absorbs thought, patience, or strength, that might have been seriously employed, it loses its distinctive character, and becomes the task-

work of idleness. For this reason, an elegant occupation of leisure hours may become very questionable to a Christian mind, keeping a debtor-and-creditor account of time. In any case, the opinions of a Bishop and a Poet are worth hearing :—



CHESS.

BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

Either 'tis a lottery or not. If it be a lottery, it is not lawful; because 'tis a great presumption and sin to set God at

CHESS.

WILLIAM COWPER.

Who, then, that has a mind well strung and tuned
To contemplation, and within his reach
A scene so friendly to his fav'rite taste,

BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

work to recreate ourselves. If it be not a lottery, then it is not a pure recreation; for if it depends on man's wit and study, it exercises his brain and spirits as if he was about other things. So that being on one side not lawful—on the other side no recreation, it can on no side be lawful.—*Private Thoughts.*

WILLIAM COWPER.

Would waste attention on the chequer'd board,
His host of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching and counter-marching, with an eye
As fix'd as marble, with a forehead ridg'd
And furrowed into storms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?
Task, B. i.

Very fearfully and wonderfully made are these same 'brain and spirits,' of which Beveridge speaks. People, who dwell by the Lakes, sometimes see them dappled over, of a sudden, with spots of shadow, when the sky is without a cloud. The Dalesmen say:—"It will be no hay-day, for the lake is full of shades." The mind presents a similar phenomenon. Things are in their common state. Perhaps our sky is bright, and pleasant thoughts and hopes—the heart's sunbeams—sparkle around us. But in a moment, the fancy is strangely affected: spots darken it: doubts, and fears, and little sadnesses—the shades on the lake—chequer the mirror all over. Whence do they come?—for there is no cloud. The exclamation of the Dalesman is the heart's sigh—Alas! it will be no harvest of ripe thoughts to-day.

AUGUST 3RD.

IF a student ever begin to plume himself on his reading in the week, let him take up a volume of Warburton, and learn his own poverty. The remedy will be pungent, but effectual. This remarkable man has been painted by the pencils of Bolingbroke, Johnson, Hurd, and Parr. The outline by Pope's friend is like a

rough study in chalk for one of Rembrandt's heads :—" The man was communicative enough, but there was nothing distinct in his mind. To ask him a question, was to wind up a spring in his memory that rolled in vast rapidity and with a confused noise, till the force of it was spent, and you went away with all the noise in your ears, stunned and uninformed."

The judgment of Johnson was not much milder:—" If I had written with hostility of Warburton in my Shakspere, I should have quoted this couplet :—

> Here learning, blinded first and then beguiled,
> Looked dark as Ignorance, as Fancy wild.

You see they'd have fitted him to a T." *Dr. Adams.*—" But you did not write against Warburton." *Johnson.*—" No, Sir; I treated him with great respect, both in my preface and notes."

Warburton regarded his contemporary's behaviour in a darker light. Hints of wounded authorship break out in his letters: —" The remarks he makes in every page on my commentaries, are full of insolence and malignant reflections," &c. And, again, to Hurd:—" Of this Johnson, you and I, I believe, think pretty much alike."

The giants once met at the house of the Bishop of St. Asaph. Warburton looked on Johnson, at first, with some surliness; but after being jostled into conversation, they retired to a window, and in taking leave Warburton *patted* his companion. They ought to have liked each other, having so many good and evil qualities in common. Both were of humble parentage and lifted over the crowd into comfort and fame; both despots, and reigning by terror; both impetuous and coarse; both familiar with broadest and narrowest paths of literature; Warburton knowing most of philosophy and Greek; Johnson of poetry and polite learning.

Neither was richly endowed with taste, whatever Pope might choose to affirm of his advocate. But Johnson, even with Lycidas scowling in his face, had the larger share. Warburton tumbled everything into his vast heaps of erudition. That flame of genius must have been strong which shot up through the rubbish and dust. And it did ascend. The fire is never stifled. The Legation may be a paradox, but it blazes. The style, in the highest degree nervous and animated, abounds in sallies of mirth, happinesses of phrase, glowing outbursts of feeling, and curiosities of abuse. His sarcasm has the keenest edge:—"The learned and judicious Mr. Huet, who, not content to seize as lawful prize all he meets with in the waste of fabulous times, makes cruel inroads into the cultivated ages of literature."—(D. L., b. iii. sect. 6.)

I recollect an amusing anecdote of Warburton, in a letter of Mrs. Carter (1763) to Miss Talbot. The scene was a stage-coach between Deal and London:—"As Nancy might possibly give you a formidable account of my three fellow-travellers, I think it necessary to inform you that they did not eat me up; for which I was the more obliged to them, as they seemed disposed to eat everything else that came in their way. By their discourse I believe they were pilots to the packet-boats. One of them, in great simplicity, gave a very concise account of one of his passengers. He said he had once carried over one Warburton, a very old orator,—you may read about him in the almanacks. He was a member of parliament then, but he has been made a bishop since. Poor Bishop Warburton, to have all his fame reduced to what one may read about him in the almanacks!"

AUGUST 4TH.

A PAINTER may sit before a glass and draw himself, but the mental portrait must be taken by other hands. Every man is his own deceiver. "I will not give the algebraist sixpence for his encomiums on my Task, if he condemns my Homer, which I know in point of language is equal to it, and in variety of numbers superior." The self-love of Milton was not weaker than Cowper's. A preference of Paradise Lost to Regained, made him angry. When Johnson was requested to name the finest couplet he had ever written, he repeated the two most pompous verses in his works. Tasso was willing to let the Jerusalemme be estimated by its poorest stanza. The mistake of Milton and Cowper in a literary, other authors have made in a moral or personal sense.

"What has this book," exclaims Sterne of Tristram, "done more than the Legation of Moses, that it may not swim down the gutter of time along with it!" "Methinks, when I write to you," says Pope to Congreve, "I am writing a confession. I have got (I cannot tell how) such a custom of throwing myself out upon paper without reserve." The last time Dr. Warton saw Young, he was censuring the inflated style of poetry. He said that such tumultuous writers reminded him of a passage in Milton:—

> Others, with vast Typhœan rage more fell,
> Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
> In whirlwinds.

And yet Sterne must have known that his book was steeped in corruption; Pope, that even his commonest notes of invitation were artificial; and Young, that a swelling extravagance of phrase was the besetting sin of his genius.

We have an amusing instance of this self-blindness in Hogarth. Talking to a visitor about his favourite line of beauty, he affirmed that no man who really understood it could, by any accident, be ungraceful in his manners. "I myself," he added, "from my perfect knowledge of it, should not hesitate as to the becoming mode of offering anything to the greatest monarch." And at the very moment when he was enlarging upon the advantages of familiarity with the line of beauty, his own attitude was so unspeakably ridiculous, that his friend struggled, almost in vain, to refrain from laughter. These examples are so many calls to reflection, self-examination, and knowledge. After the Bible, a man ought to make himself his chief reading. He must not skip a hard page, but work out the meaning.

August 5th.

Taking up again the thread of poetical imitations which I began to unwind the other day, I notice a very pleasing description by Aaron Hill, which, in one or two lines, is even tenderer than that in the Pleasures of Memory. Southey commends him as deserving respect for his talents and virtues, and "holding the first place for liberality and beneficence among the literary men of his country." He brought a blush to the cheek of Pope. His versification is often musical and swelling—as upon a lady at her spinnet—

> Fearless, with face oblique, her formal hand
> Plunges with bold neglect amid the keys,
> And sweeps the sounding range with magic ease.

But the lines, "Alone in an Inn at Southampton, April 25, 1737," furnish the most favourable evidence of his talents :—

AARON HILL.

Pensive and cold this room in each changed part
I view, and, shock'd, from every object start:
There hung the watch, that, beating hours from day,
Told its sweet owner's lessening life away;
There, her dear diamond taught the sash my name;
'Tis gone! frail image of love, life, and fame.
That glass, she dress'd at, keeps her form no more;
Not one dear footstep tunes th' unconscious floor.
There sat she,—yet those chairs no sense retain,
And busy recollection smarts in vain.
Sullen, and dim, what faded scenes are here!
I wonder, and retract a starting tear,
Gaze in attentive doubt, with anguish swell,
And o'er and o'er on each weigh'd object dwell:
Then to the window rush, gay views invite,
And tempt idea to permit delight;
But unimpressive—all in sorrow drown'd,
One void forgetful desert blooms around.

ROGERS.

As o'er the dusky furniture I bend,
Each chair awakes the feeling of a friend;
The storied arras, source of fond delight,
With old achievement charms the wilder'd sight;
The screen unfolds its many-colour'd chart,
The clock still points its moral to the heart.
That faithful monitor 'twas heaven to hear,
When soft it spoke a promised pleasure near;
And has its sober hand, its simple chime,
Forgot to trace the feather'd feet of Time?
That massive beam with curious carvings wrought,
Where the caged linnet soothed my pensive thought;
Those muskets cased with venerable rust;
Those once-loved forms still breathing through their dust,
Still from the frame in mould gigantic cast,
Starting to life,—all whisper of the Past.

The watch numbering the hours of his wife's sickness, and the glass that no longer retained her image, seem to me circumstances of affectionate grief most touchingly conceived.

The more we read, the more the original stock of thought dwindles. The famous description, in the Essay on Criticism, of the intermediate heights of literature ascending before the eyes of the climbing pilgrim, which Johnson praised as the most apt,

sublime, and proper simile in the English language, has been shown by Warton to be copied, almost literally, from Drummond. The outline having been traced over the glass of memory, the artist laid on the colouring.

Pope sought for pearls in some of the prose writers of the seventeenth century, who, in his day, were known to few scholars, and scarcely read by any. In them he found many of those brilliant sayings and axioms of moral wisdom, which, polished by taste and sharpened by skill, present such glittering points in his verse. The ingenious designation of one year—

> —— a reservoir to keep and spare:
> The next a fountain spouting through his heir,

has been traced to the Church History of Fuller. The same witty and eloquent writer asks, with reference to the contemptuous neglect with which false and scandalous rumours should be regarded, "What madness were it to plant a piece of *ordnance to beat down an aspen leaf!*" Pope, in his satire upon Lord Hervey, has the vivacious and cutting interrogation—

> Who breaks a butterfly upon the wheel?

Fuller says, that Monica, the mother of Augustine, "saw a glimpse of happiness through the chinks of her sickness-broken body;" Waller, describing the calmness of the mind when the storms of youth and manhood have subsided, introduces the same image into his celebrated lines:—

> The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
> Lets in new light, through chinks which time has made.

While speaking of these resemblances of thought, I may notice a curious coincidence between Dryden and Lord Bacon. Dryden says of a satirist—

> He makes his desperate passes with a smile.

Lord Bacon remarks of controversial writers upon subjects connected with the church—"To search and rip up *wounds with a laughing countenance.*"

Tickell wrote a poem on the death of Addison: popular and pleasing it is. Goldsmith called it the finest elegy in the language; Johnson indirectly preferred it to Milton's pastoral dirge. Of course, the two Doctors were equally wrong; I only mean to refer to the saying of Steele, that the poem is *prose in rhyme.* He was literally correct without knowing it. Read the famous couplet—

> He taught us how to live, and (oh! too high
> The price for knowledge) taught us how to die;

and then turn to the fifth book of Hooker's Polity. He is treating of the prayer in the Litany against sudden death; and argues that the Christian ought to desire a dismissal like that of Moses, or Jacob, or Joshua, or David—a peaceful, leisurely termination of life, so as to comfort those whom he leaves behind, by filling their hearts with faith and hope; "*and, to sum up all, to teach the world no less virtuously how to die, than they had done before how to live.*" Here is Tickell's golden rhyme in its native bed of prose. However, in poetry, as in nature, everything is double. If Tickell borrows, he also lends. His Ode on the Prospect of Peace, which obtained the warm praise of Addison, contains the outline of Goldsmith's lively portrait of the returning soldier:—



TICKELL.

Near the full bowl he draws the fancied line,
And makes feign'd trenches in the flowing wine;
Then sets the invested fort before her eyes,
And mines that whirl'd battalions to the skies.

GOLDSMITH.

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away.
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.

AUGUST 6TH.

SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT said one day to Constable—"Do you not find it difficult to place your brown tree?" "Not in the least," was the answer, "for I never put such a thing in a picture!" On another occasion, the accomplished critic recommended the colour of an old violin for the prevailing tint of a landscape. Constable replied by laying one upon the lawn before the house. This morning I have amused myself with looking at our home scenery, with reference to the rival theories; and certainly, at the first glance, I saw nothing of the 'Cremona' in tree, field, or lane. The white beech, stained over with faint, silvery green, is unlike the trunk of Hobbema or Both. But it might have stood to Constable for its portrait.

I think that the apparent contradiction may be explained. The colour of trees and grass depends chiefly on the light and distance in which they are viewed. Walk up to an elm, and mark the sunshine running along its sides, and afterwards retire to the end of the glade and look back; the bright tint will be sobered into a shadowy gloom, altogether different. The same change may be observed in the openings of a wood; and accordingly a poet, who has the true painter's eye, describes—

> The mossy pales that skirt the orchard green,
> Here hid by shrubwood, there by glimpses seen;
> *And the brown pathway, that with careless flow*
> Sinks, and is lost among the trees below.

Wilkie says of one of Titian's famous landscapes, "The whites

are yellow, the blue sky is green, and the green trees are the deepest brown. I have seen Ostade often on this scale; and if successful effect constitutes authority, how practically terrible is the tone of this great work; but how removed from the practice of modern times!"

Clever, scoffing Matthews (the "Invalid"), used to declare that G. Poussin's green landscapes had no charms for him, and that the delightful verdurous tint of nature could not be transferred by the pencil. The great masters took their colours from autumn, breathing a mellow shade of ideal hues over the whole. As Sir G. Beaumont observed of Rembrandt, they nourished the picture with warmth.

Titian produced *compositions;* Constable *copies.* Not a spot of moss escapes him. I remember a striking illustration of his faithfulness:—A cottage is closely surrounded by a corn-field, which, on the side sheltered from the heat of the sun, continues to be green, while the other parts are ripening into the golden colour. This truth of representation drew from an admirer the exclamation—"How fresh, how dewy, how exhilarating!" Of the elder painters, Albano alone preserved the green of his trees, though he touched them with a soft light of poetry unknown and unfelt by the English artist. The merit of Constable is in some degree that of Cowper. The middle tints of Claude, or the transparent distances of Rubens, were equally beyond his taste and capacity. He is pleasing, because he is true. Compare his trees with those of Watteau, of which the grotesqueness was a puzzle to Walpole, until he recognised them in the trimmed branches of the Tuileries.

An amusing page might be written on the favourite trees of landscape painters. G. Poussin was partial to the thin-leaved acacia; Ruysdael to the broad oak; Claude to the elm and

stone pine; Rubens to the stumpy pollard; Salvator Rosa delighted in the chestnut, which flourished in the Calabrian mountains, where he studied it in all its forms; breaking and disposing it, as Gilpin says, in a thousand beautiful shapes, as the exigencies of his composition required. Perhaps its brittleness, which causes it to be often shattered by storms, recommended it still more to his picturesque eye.

Claude and Rubens may be regarded as the two types of landscape art. Standing between their pictures, we are led to compare the first to an Idyl of Theocritus; the second, to a splendid grouping of Thomson. The former is all grace and sameness; the latter is all variety and brightness. In the Italian master, the fine sense of truthfulness is conspicuous. The season, the temperature, and the hour are defined. We feel warm in his summer noons, and draw our cloak round us in the cool air of autumn evenings. The History of Claude furnishes another example of the opposition and contradictions of Taste. Of his figures, Wilson said—"Do not fall into the common mistake of objecting to Claude's figures." And Gilpin lamented that the same pencil

> Oft crowded scenes which nature's self might own,
> With forms ill drawn, ill chosen, ill arrang'd,
> Of man and beast, o'er-loading with false taste
> His sylvan glories.

Hazlitt observed of Rubens, that he carries some one quality, or aspect of nature, to the extreme verge of probability. In other words, his works are always picturesque—*i. e.* composed with reference to the eye and its sensations. In a picture at St. Petersburg, the rose-tints of evening and the silver rays of the rising moon are strangely, but sweetly, intermingled. Rubens

makes that appearance to be Nature, which is only one of her accidents. I have seen the setting sun redden the wood, and the rainbow spanning the lake; so that at one and the same instant of time the elm-tree was sprinkled with gold, and the distant field swam in a melting glory. Rubens would have spread this dazzling confusion of light and shade over his canvas, and called it "Evening." Perhaps he might have drawn from it a lesson in allegory; for, like the poet of Faëry Land, he is ever bending over the fountains of fancy:—

> His own warm blush within the water glows,
> With him the colour'd shadow comes and goes.

Claude is, I believe, the only painter, in old time, who has shown the beautiful effect of sunshine through trees upon water. Rubens endeavoured to copy the spots of light streaming among leaves; but the embellishment belongs rather to poetry, and Shakspere has applied it to the appearance of Truth breaking into the conscience; as the sun

> Fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
> And darts his light through every guilty hole.

Another charming accident of light—the chequer of sunbeams on grass—when,

> Rolling their mazy network to and fro,
> Light shadows shift and play,

is a favourite and pleasing decoration of landscape. Price remarks, that in extreme brilliancy of lights Rubens has no competitor; sometimes they are unmixed with shade; or they burst from dark clouds, darting over the picture, and producing what is called a *flicker*,—very captivating, but scarcely imitable by a weaker hand.

The same admirable critic cautions us against looking at the atmospheric delineations of Rubens with the mere English eye. He painted in Flanders, where the thick yellow clouds are permeated by the crimson fire of the sun. Accordingly, he gives us his own nature; and wonderful it is. What air!—how thin, impalpable! Only Teniers might equal it. In the "Going to Market," at Windsor, the road that leads to the Flemish town appears to wind away illimitably—to die in space. And then the glow and shadow!

The peculiar beauties in the style and handling of Rubens have been skilfully woven together in a poem by Mr. Bowles—when this Journal first appeared, the oldest of our living poets, but now gathered into his Master's granary. Much of interest is folded up in the history of his life; inspiring Coleridge, cheering Southey, and enjoying the friendship of Crabbe. I have his last poem—"St. John in Patmos"—enriched by his own corrections. But to return to Rubens. The picture which Mr. Bowles has illustrated now hangs in our National Gallery:—

Nay, let us gaze, even till the sense is full,
Upon the rich creation, shadowed so
That not great Nature in her loftiest pomp
Of living beauty, ever on the sight
Rose more magnificent, nor aught so fair
Hath Fancy in her wild and sweetest mood
Imaged of things most lovely, when the sounds
Of this cold cloudy world at distance sink,
And all alone the warm idea lives,
Of what is great, or beautiful, or good,
In Nature's general plan.
Such the vast scope,
O Rubens! of thy mighty mind, and such
The fervour of thy pencil pouring wide
The still illumination, that the mind
Pauses, absorb'd, and scarcely thinks what powers
Of mortal art the sweet enchantment wrought.

She sees the painter, with no human touch,
Create, embellish, animate at will
The mimic scenes, from Nature's ampler range
Caught, as by inspiration, while the clouds,
High-wand'ring, and the fairest form of things,
Seem at his bidding to emerge, and burn
With radiance and with life.
Let us, subdued
Now to the magic of the moment, lose
The thoughts of life, and mingle every sense,
Even in the scenes before us.
The fresh morn
Of summer shines; the white clouds of the east
Are crisped; beneath the bluey champaign steams,
The banks, the meadows, and the flowers send up
An increased exhalation.
Mark again the various view—
Some city's far off spires and domes appear,
Breaking the long horizon, where the morn
Sits blue and soft; what glowing imagery
Is spread beneath! Towns, villages, like smoke,
And scarce-seen windmill-sails, and devious woods,
Check'ring 'mid sunshine the grass-level land,
That stretches from the sight.
Now nearer trace
The forms of trees distinct, the broad brown oak,
The poplars that with silvery trunks incline,
Shading the lonely castle; flakes of light
Are flung behind the massy groups, that now,
Enlarging and enlarging still, unfold
Their separate beauties—But awhile delay—
Pass the foot-bridge, and listen (for we hear,
Or think we hear her), listen to the song
Of yonder milkmaid, as she brims her pail,
Whilst in the yellow pasture, pensive near,
The red cows ruminate.
"Break off—break off," for lo! where all alarm'd
The small birds, from their late resounding porch,
Fly various, hush'd their early song; and mark,
Beneath the darkness of the bramble bank
That overhangs the half-seen brook, where nod
The flow'ring rushes, dew besprent; with breast
Ruddy, and emerald wing, the king-fisher
Steals through the dripping sedge away; what shape
Of terror scares the woodland habitants,

Marring the music of the dawn? Look round!
See, where he creeps beneath the willow stump,
Cow'ring, and low, step silent after step.
The booted fowler; keen his look, and fixt



Upon the adverse bank, while with firm hand
He grasps the deadly tube; his dog, with ears
Flung back, and still and steady eye of fire,
Points to the prey; the boor intent moves on,
Panting, and creeping, close beneath the leaves,

And fears lest even the rustling leaves betray
His footfall; nearer yet, and yet more near
He stalks!—Ah, who shall save the heedless group!
The speckled partridges that in the sun,
On yonder hillock green, across the stream,
Bask unalarm'd beneath the hawthorn bush,
Whose aged boughs the crawling blackberry
Entwines.

The country Kate, with shining morning cheek,
(Who in the tumbril with her market gear
Sits seated high,) seems to expect the flash
Exploding——

Not so the clown, who, heedless whether life
Or death betide, across the splashing ford
Drives slow: the beasts plod on, foot follows foot,
Aged and grave, with half-erected ears,
As now his whip above their matted manes
Hangs trem'lous, while the dark and shallow stream
Flashes beneath their fetlock; he, astride
On harness saddle, not a sidelong look
Deigns at the breathing landscape, or the maid
Smiling behind; the cold and lifeless calf
Her sole companion——

But lift the eye,
And hail th' abode of rural ease. The man
Walks forth from yonder antique hall, that looks
The mistress of the scene: its turrets gleam
Amid the trees, and cheerful smoke is seen——

On the balustrade
Of the old bridge, that o'er the moat is thrown,
The fisher with his angle leans intent,
And turns from the bright pomp of spreading plains,
To watch the nimble fry, that, glancing oft,
Beneath the grey arch shoot.

Lo! where the morning light, through the dark wood,
Upon the window pane is flung like fire.
Hail, "Life and Hope!" and thou, great work of art,
That, 'mid this populous and busy swarm
Of man, dost smile serene, as with the hues
Of fairest, grandest nature, mayst thou speak
Not vainly of th' endearments and best joys
That nature yields. The manliest head, that swells
With honest English feelings,
Charm'd for a moment by this mantling view,
Its anxious tumults shall suspend.



Chiefly thou,
Great Rubens, shalt the willing senses lead,
Enamoured of the varied imagery
That fills the vivid canvas, swelling full

On the enraptured eye of taste, and still
New charms unfolding; though minute, yet grand,
Simple, yet most luxuriant—every light
And every shade greatly opposed, and all
Subserving to one magical effect
Of truth and harmony.
So glows the scene;
And to the pensive thought refined displays
The richest rural poem.

AUGUST 7TH.

I FIND Orrery's letters on Swift very amusing. He is an earlier Boswell, without his dramatic power. The apprenticeship of both was severe. He assured Warburton that his pursuit of the Dean had been attended by numberless mortifications. However, he had his reward. The entire impression of his letters was sold in a single day; and Warburton mentions, in his correspondence with Hurd, that the publisher had disposed of twelve thousand copies. It would be very amusing to run over the animadversions on these letters, written in the margin of the copy in Hartlebury Library. The continuation of Rousseau's Memoirs obtained a welcome of equal fervour in Paris, and faded from the public mind with the same rapidity. "In eight days," said La Harpe, "all the world had read them, and in eight days all the world had forgotten them." Swift's Adventures of Gulliver were out of print in a week.

Occasionally, but after long intervals of neglect, the tide of enthusiasm has hurried productions of learning and research into notice. The first volume of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire was not to be obtained in a few days after its appearance; the succeeding impressions scattered it over "almost every toilet." Yet, to mark the uncertainty of popular

applause, Hume's History of England, which he commenced with the most sanguine expectations, lay unnoticed on the shelf of the bookseller. In twelve months, Millar sold only forty-five copies. Atterbury expressed his "fixed opinion" that the reputation of all books, perfectly well written, proceeds originally from the few. The exquisite tragedy of Athalie—the pride of the French drama—which awoke the admiration of Boileau and the tears of Voltaire,—was received with ridicule and contempt. The perusal of a given number of lines from it was one of the punishments inflicted upon fashionable offenders, in the distinguished circles of Paris. The most excellent comedy of Ben Jonson met with a fate scarcely less discouraging.

Johnson entertained a more favourable opinion of Orrery's conduct than Warburton has expressed. When he was asked, whether he did not regard it as unjust to expose the failings of one, with whom we may have lived in habits of intimacy, his reply was, "Why, no, Sir; after the man is dead; for then it is done historically." Swift spoke kindly of Orrery; he styles him, in a letter to Pope, a most worthy gentleman.

August 8th.

Many literary stories seem to be shadows, brighter or fainter, of others told before. I came upon an example this morning. Mr. Nichols, the intimate companion and correspondent of Gray, was not more than nineteen years old, when a friend procured for him an introduction to the poet. Gray, pleased with his manner and conversation, invited him to his rooms, and cultivated his acquaintance. There is something graphic in the incident, as related by Mathias. The conversation having taken a classical

turn, Nichols ventured to offer a remark, and to illustrate it by a quotation from Dante. "At the name of Dante, Mr. Gray suddenly turned round to him, and said, 'Right; but have you read Dante, Sir?' 'I have endeavoured to understand him,' was the apt reply of Nichols."

I hope there is nothing apocryphal in the anecdote; but one strongly resembling it is related of Dryden. He was seated in his arm-chair at Will's, indulging in some commendation of his recently published Mac Flecknoe; he added that he valued himself the more upon it, because it was the first piece of ridicule written in heroics. There happened to be listening, in a corner of the room, an odd-looking boy, with short, rough hair, who mustered up sufficient hardihood to mutter that the poem was a very good one, but that he had not supposed it to have been the first ever written in that manner. Dryden, turning briskly on his critic, with a smile, said, "Pray, Sir, what is it that you did imagine to have been writ before?" "Boileau's Lutrin, and Tassoni's Secchia Rapita," was the answer. Dryden acknowledged the truth of the correction, and desired the censor to call upon him the next day. The boy with the rough hair was Lockier, afterwards Dean of Peterborough, who continued to enjoy the poet's acquaintance until his death. But his Italian chronology was somewhat at fault; for Pulci introduced the burlesque before Tassoni. As to Mac Flecknoe, recent criticism has softened the censure of Johnson. In four hundred lines, Mr. Hallam finds not one weak or careless. It need not be said that Dryden is wanting in the graceful humour of Tassoni, and the exquisite polish of Boileau. His wit had more weight than edge. It beat in armour, but could not cut gauze.

I ought to ask forgiveness of Boswell, or his shade, for comparing his biographical trials with those endured by Orrery, in his endeavours to smooth down the fretful Dean. What a dark,

lowering face Onslow gives him;—"Proud, insolent, void of all decency, offensive to his friends, almost as much as to his enemies; hating all men, and even human nature itself; wanting to be a tyrant to gratify his ambition and disdain of the world." It might be instructive to draw a parallel between Swift and Sterne, as reflected in Gulliver and Tristram. In both we should find the same grotesque images, the same explosions of laughter, the same vividness of delineation, the same deep, jagged gashes into human nature, and the same lust for all that is degraded and revolting. Every disease of the soul has a clinical description. Each book of Swift is

> A case of skeletons well done,
> And malefactors every one.

Both possessed genius; but genius blasted with fire, and exiled from the pure heaven of imagination. Sterne had one softening quality of intellect, unshared by the Dean—the power of moving the heart. Our conviction of the hypocrisy of his pathos is the only check to its tyranny. Swift was the truer man, as Sterne was the more melodramatic.

AUGUST 9TH.

A STORY is told of an ancient painter who threw a brush at a picture; and another of Reynolds, who dipped it in cinder dust. Each produced the effect he desired. Again—Titian and Raffaelle did not employ costly colours, even in their oil-paintings, but chiefly earths and common colours. The experience and practice of great poets are the same. The bright image, that darted into the mind like a sunbeam; or the phrase, so hazardously ventured on, and so exquisitely significant, is the pencil hurled at the canvas, or rubbed in the cinders. Simple, every-day words are

the earths of the poet. The pen, not the pigment, gives the life and charm. Mr. Harrison, in his interesting view of the English Language, points out the magnificent impression, in Milton's hand, of the single epithet—

—— all too little seems
To stuff his maw—this vast *unhidebound* corpse.

Death is portrayed as a monster, not confined within superficies, and, therefore, by nature insatiable; a page would only have weakened the image. In poetical landscapes, this representative faculty of a few syllables is very surprising; as in the line of Beattie,

And lake dim gleaming on the *smoky* lawn;

and more vividly still in the exquisite verses of Wordsworth:—

The grass is bright with rain-drops,—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth,
And with her feet she from the *plashy* earth
Raises a mist; that, *glittering* in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

In marine views, Crabbe carried the art to its utmost boundary; read the sketch of the oyster-dredger,

—— cold and wet, and *driving* with the tide;

or of the shingle hot beneath the feet, and moist to the hand, as we turn up the wet shining stones in the sun. The lazy tide rakes its way back over the pebbles; the distant ship, the wind dying out of her sails, sinks to sleep on the sleeping sea; or the breeze freshens, and then the waves begin to stir,—

Their colours changing, when from clouds and sun
Shades after shades upon the surface run.

The three following specimens present picture-poetry in the most pleasing form:—



Summer's light garb itself now cumbrous grown,
Each his thin doublet in the shade throws down;
Where oft the mastiff skulks with half-shut eye,
And rouses at the stranger passing by.

RAIN ON A RIVER.

KIRKE WHITE.

And list, the rain-drops beat the leaves,
Or smoke upon the cottage eaves;
Or, silent dimpling on the stream,
Convert to lead its silver gleam.

EVENING SHADOWS.

COLLINS.

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires:
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

Perhaps the one life-giving stroke of genius will be better appreciated, after comparing a description by Thomson with one by White:—

CLOSE OF DAY.

THOMSON.

—— sober evening takes
Her wonted station in the middle air;
A thousand shadows at her beck. First this
She sends on earth; then that of deeper dye
Steals soft behind; and then a deeper still,
In circle following circle, gathers round.
—— A fresher gale
Begins to wave the wood, and stir the stream,
Sweeping with shadowy gust the field of corn;
While the quail clamours for his running mate.
—— *A faint erroneous ray,*
Glanc'd from the imperfect surfaces of things,
Flings half the image on the straining eye;
While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,
And rocks and mountain-tops that long retain'd
The ascending gleam, are all one *swimming scene,*
Uncertain if beheld.

CLOSE OF DAY.

WHITE OF SELBORNE.

When day, declining, sheds a milder gleam,
What time the May-fly haunts the pool or stream;
When the still owl skims round the grassy mead,
What time the timorous hare limps forth to feed:
Then be the time to steal adown the vale,
And listen to the vagrant cuckoo's tale;
To hear the clamorous curlew call his mate,
Or the soft quail his tender pain relate.
To mark the swift, in rapid giddy wing,
Dash round the steeple, unsubdued of wing.
While deep'ning shades obscure the face of day,
To yonder bench, leaf-sheltered, let us stray,
Till blended objects fail the swimming sight,
And all the fading landscape sinks in night;
To hear the drowsy dorr come brushing by
With buzzing wing, or the shrill cricket cry;
To see the feeding bat glance through the wood,
While o'er the cliff th' awakened churn-owl hung,
Through the still gloom protracts his chattering song;
When, high in air, and pois'd upon his wings,
Unseen, the soft enamour'd wood-lark sings.

Mark the difference between the poet and the naturalist.

August 11th.

A thought occurs to me—comforting, or discouraging, as the case may be—that no work of genius can produce the same effect upon a widely civilised and an ignorant age. Would any poet now be so out of proportion to his contemporaries, as Chaucer was in England, or Dante in Italy, during the fourteenth century? What Madonna of Raffaelle awoke equal wonder in the people's mind with the Madonna of Cimabue, which all Florence followed to its home in the church of the Dominicans; or what later face of the Virgin obtained the national consecration of Ugolino's, and drew crowds as to a shrine? Continual intercourse with men, one inch over the average, soon takes off the awfulness of the giant; a time of cleverness is the worst season for a grand intellect; the descent of an angel is most dazzling through a cloud.

August 12th.

I bring my journal to an end with the dying lights and bloom of summer-time. This is one of those soft lulling afternoons, when, in Thomson's expressive line—

> —— his sweetest beams
> The sun sheds equal o'er the meeken'd day.

Not that the season has really begun to fade. I cannot yet say of Our Village: "How beautiful the lane is to-day, decorated with a thousand colours! The brown road and the rich verdure that borders it, strewed with the pale yellow leaves of the elm, just beginning to fall; hedge-rows glowing with long wreaths of

the bramble in every variety of purplish red; and overhead the unchanged green of the fir, contrasting with the spotted sycamore, the tawny beech, and the dry leaves of the oak, which rustle as the light wind passes through them; a few common hardy yellow flowers, (for yellow is the common colour of flowers, whether wild or cultivated, as blue is the rare one,) of many sorts, but almost of one tint, still blowing in spite of the season; and ruddy berries glowing through all. How very beautiful is the lane!" No; several days, or even weeks, must glide away before that picture will be ours. But Autumn comes in all his pageantry!

> Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
> Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
> While varied clouds paint the soft-dying day,
> And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
> Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
> Among the river-shallows, borne aloft,
> Or sinking, as the light wind lives or dies;
> And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
> Hedge-crickets sing; and now, with treble soft,
> The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
> And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

And, while I speak, the shadowy gust has shaken a leaf into my hand. Gone at last! It lived through the summer, and only died this afternoon. Some leaves of the same bough I found withered, or broken off, in the early spring, almost before the light foot of the linnet had made it tremble. Gradually unfolding their hidden verdure under the fostering rain and sun, they looked lovely. But a change soon appeared in the texture. The vivid hue waxed pale; the vigour declined; the delicate tracery of veins, by which the life-blood of the tree is circulated, was wasted and defaced; the leaves shrivelled up, and, after fluttering to and fro upon the branch, drifted into the path, and were trodden under foot. Why did these leaves wither and die? An insect,

minute, almost imperceptible, had fastened upon them. Day after day, hour after hour, it clung with devouring appetite, slowly, but surely, extracting the life and strength; and so, while their leafy kindred waved in the breath of May, and the balmy sun played



upon them, the work of death was being done, and the leaves were falling from the bough.

And if many of this sylvan family perish in the spring, surely some of the family of man die also; not only in the outer frame-work

of limb and feature, but in the precious inward life. The fireside of English homes and the foliage of the wood give the same warning. Through the slow developments of infancy and childhood, the understanding grows under the ripening influences of love. The eyes of the household turn with lingering tenderness to the youngest leaf upon the tree. How often, how soon, a change is visible! The sweet purity and freshness decline; then the circulation of the spiritual blood is impeded. Whence comes the mournful alteration? Still the leaf of our wood is an image of the leaf of our affection. It was an insect *there;* it is an insect *here.* Some reptile passion has fastened upon the budding graces, and clings to them with a deadly constancy of hunger.

The leaves that summer spared, the autumn gales will scatter. Death must reign in the bright, silent woodlands. But the sight is beautiful. The leaf is not devoured by insects, nor scorched by heat;

The maple burns itself away.

The tracery of the tree grows transparent, as if a light were shining through it. Doubtless the leaves rustled under the feet of Homer, in some fragrant Grecian wood, when he compared the history of men to the blooming and death of the bough.

It is a solemn spectacle to behold a Christian spirit, in the waning lustre of life, becoming lovelier every hour; having a sublimer faith, a brighter hope, a kinder sympathy, a gentler resignation. How could Johnson, with his treasures of wisdom, virtue, and experience, give utterance to the melancholy complaint: "Thus pass my days and nights in morbid weakness, in unseasonable sleepiness, in gloomy solitude, with unwelcome visitors or ungrateful exclusions, in variety of wretchedness!"

Not thus ought the philosopher and the saint to bid farewell to the living. Rather, like the autumn leaf, he glows into decay, and kindles into death. The sun of Paradise, already risen over his soul, burns through the delicate fibres of thought, feeling, and desire; making every word and deed beautiful beyond utterance, in the radiancy of truth, hope, and peace. He may exclaim :—

> Life! we've been long together,
> Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
> 'T is hard to part when friends are dear;
> Perhaps 't will cost a sigh, a tear;
> Then steal away, give little warning,
> Choose thine own time;
> Say not "Good night," but in some brighter clime
> Bid me "Good morning."

But in this wood some leaves never brighten; they wither and fall without a tint of beauty. Wonderful prophet of Chios, in thy blindness full of visions! The leaf that I hold in my hand is still the emblem of my nature and race. Life has its shrivelled branches. What a picture Gray draws of one of these leaves—yellow, but not reddening—dropping from the tree with no flush of light or colour to cheer it! "I have now every day before my eyes a woman of ninety, my aunt, who has for many years been gradually turning into chalk-stones. They are making their way out of both feet, and the surgeon comes twice a day to increase the torture. She is just as sensible and as impatient of pain as she ever was sixty years ago." No flame of the leaf is here, but a cold wintry parching up of verdure and health. How different from the spectacle that sometimes charms and awes us: when the natural harshness of the tree has been worn out by the painful husbandry of suffering, and "the root of selfishness yields the fruit of love."

This leaf says to me something more. Its usefulness does not end with its life. When I cast it on the ground, it will not be lost. It enriches the soil. Autumn feeds Spring. The withered leaves help to bring forth the green. Here is my admonition. Minutes are the leaves of life. The decay of one year is the foliage of the next. I have been deeply impressed by a late writer's sublime parable of a man shut up in a fortress, under sentence of perpetual imprisonment, and obliged to draw water from a reservoir which he may not see, but into which no fresh stream is ever to be poured. How much it contains he cannot tell. He knows that the quantity is not great; it may be extremely small. He has already drawn out a considerable supply, during his long imprisonment. The diminution increases daily; and how, it is asked, "would he feel each time of drawing water, and each time of drinking it?" Not as if he had a perennial spring to go to; "I have a reservoir, I may be at ease." No; "I had water yesterday, I have water to-day; but my having had it yesterday, and my having it to-day, is the very cause that I shall not have it on some day that is approaching."

Surely this is a beautiful image, and true as beautiful. It is no violent metaphor to represent life as a fortress, and man a prisoner within its gates. Time is the dark Reservoir from which he drinks; but he cannot descend to examine its depth or its quantity. He draws his supply from a fountain fed by invisible pipes. Nay, we do not often see the fountain. We conceal it with thick trees; we strive to hide Time. Still, if we would linger by it for a moment, we might discover the various flow of the water at different seasons of the human year. In spring and summer—our childhood and early youth—the sunshine of hope silvers every drop; and if we look into the stream, the voice of some fair spirit might almost be heard speaking to us from the crystal

shrine. In autumn and winter days—our mature manhood and old age—the fountain pours a more languid and a darker current. But the thing to be remembered, in spring, summer, autumn, and winter, is, that the Reservoir which feeds the fountain is being exhausted. Every drop that fell in our sunniest days lessened the water which remains. We had life *yesterday*, and we have life *to-day;* the probability, the certainty is, that we shall not have it on some day that is coming; it strikes a chill to the heart, to think that the Reservoir may not contain enough to supply the prisoner in the dungeon for another week.

But the shadow passes from the dial; the evening glimmers away into the thick trees :—

—— Ah! slowly sink,
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun!
Shine in the slant-beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves.
—— I stand
Silent with swimming sense, yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when He makes
Spirits perceive His presence.
—— a delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad.
—— in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not marked
Much that has soothed me? Pale, beneath the blaze,
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd
Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling its sunshine! and that walnut tree
Was richly tinged, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass,
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight; and though now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee

> Sings in the night-flower. Henceforth I shall know
> That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
> No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
> No waste so vacant, but may well employ
> Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
> Awake to Love and Beauty.

Then, welcome autumn, and golden sheaves, and harvest-home! "Do not talk of the decay of the year; the season is good when the people are so. It is the best time of year for a painter." So wrote Pope. And if for a picture, surely for a life. The leaf that drops from my hand has not been gathered up in vain. It reminds me of the greener country where the leaves never fall, and the eternal day is Summer Time.

THE END.

RICHARD CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.


LEIGHTON
SON &
HODGE
LONDON